

***The Aesthetic and the Ethical:
The Dialogue Between Religious
Belief and
Literary Form
In D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot***

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By

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Personal Foreword to *The Aesthetic and the Ethical: The Dialogue Between Religious Belief And Literary Form In D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot*

This thesis began to germinate fourteen years ago as a reading of two authors and a listening to two voices, a serious and prolonged return to two of the heroes - or constructors - of my early adult mental life, and in the light of some of the experiences and reflections of middle age. A third authorial voice, in a tongue I have not mastered and from a land I have not visited, soon entered this process through the perceptive suggestion of my first Supervisor, Dr George Hyde of the University of East Anglia. I cannot know how much of Søren Kierkegaard has got 'lost in translation', but through the dedicated and diverse scholarship of many others – and, above all, of Howard and Edna Hong - I have been able to learn enough of this truly great Dane to venture on my enlarged inter-disciplinary critical conversation with more courage - on a good day - than I have any right to expect, as a mere cadger in such divers halls of learning as I have had to become. That this work has finally come to some completion is due to the support, interest and stimulus of many good friends as well as varied colleagues and adult students with whom I have shared the privilege of studying literature and theology, particularly through a time of unforeseen change in my life.

If old men should be explorers middle-aged men should be mountaineers – of the spirit, anyway. In the past ten years I got lost in mist and fog and I slipped on ice. My tent blew down once and I even lost my tools and equipment for a period. If after all this time I have reached no more than a very low plateau indeed whilst, quite predictably, my three travelling companions are still way up out of sight, it should come as no surprise. 'I can't go on – you must go on – I'll go on.' I have always found Samuel Becket's line(s) inspirational.

I must thank my Nottingham University Supervisor, Dr Macdonald Daly, for his commitment, patience and unfailing support for an often remote, wearied (and wearying) student. Latterly friends and colleagues in the Adult Education Department of the Diocese of Peterborough have affectionately and steadily encouraged me with their interest and prayers. Above all I offer this, with love, to Helen, my wife, who long ago told me in frustration and in some real distress, that she 'would never understand Kierkegaard!' I doubt that this work will help to alleviate her concern on that point but the doing of it has taught me how much she spoke for many of us: at times, including me. It has, however, been unbelievably worthwhile to try.

Andrew Rayment
May 2006

THESIS ABSTRACT

The Aesthetic and the Ethical: The Dialogue Between Religious Belief And Literary Form In D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot

This is a cross-disciplinary investigation that seeks to read some of the representative works of Eliot and of Lawrence as viewed through the critical lens of Søren Kierkegaard's authorship, its strategies and preoccupations. The third arrival in the earlier development of my theoretical project of cross-reading, and not an ascertainably direct influence, Kierkegaard soon became the dominant maieutic presence in my thesis, a fact that is deliberately signalled by the explicit reference to his Life Stages that my title makes. Some of SK's major concerns were indeed shared, idiosyncratically, by the two later writers, each in his distinct biographical, cultural and historical context. There is little undisputed and ascertainable evidence for any conscious direct influence of Kierkegaard on Eliot and still less so of Kierkegaard on Lawrence, but there are thematic, literary and, I will argue, significant *diagnostic* points of contact and mutual illumination. As Michael Bell did with Lawrence and Heidegger, beginning with Cassirer (Bell 1991: 3-4, 6-10), in the same manner I read Kierkegaard as an 'explicatory parallel' to Lawrence and Eliot, as an aid to clarify and to 'bring out the internal complexity and cogency of ... [each man's] ... conception.' I believe this to be an academically valid and illuminative approach to themes of continuing significance.

Biographical research and speculation, which continues to be intense in the case of each of these publicly enigmatic men, is largely eschewed in this literary-critical dissertation except where pertinent. However the issue of 'existence-statement', under the mutually modifying criteria of aestheticism and apostolicity, is at one and the same time a decisive and an elusive concern and how it *may* be both is a peculiarly Kierkegaardian kind of 'truth'. 'Lives' may not therefore be totally excluded from the perimeters of my discussion but must be discerningly considered, where this is germane, and with no rush to judgement. In his remarkable but flawed major study of Kierkegaard (1993), the late Dr. Roger Poole addressed this issue, perhaps too boldly in the context of a purportedly aesthetic reading, but I follow him to the extent that I have included some of my own very different and tentative researches in these areas largely in the Appendices to my main arguments.

I define the twinned issues of aestheticism and apostolicity here as, respectively, projected modes of artistic/imaginative pattern making, and the self-perceived status of one commissioned with a message to proclaim. Between these there comes a second-level Kierkegaardian Stage of awareness, the Ethical, that is transitional, explicitly purposeful but still fundamentally truncated and incomplete. These categories, themselves in constant transition, are central to my cross-comparison because in his distinctive way each writer occupied this thematically complex terrain or, put differently, his work can be profitably read through this theoretical 'grid'. Even a superficial consideration of pseudonymous Kierkegaard, 'doctrinal' Lawrence and 'invisible' Eliot indicates this. Similarly Kierkegaard's deliberate employment of the indirect as a mode of communication sheds real and variegated light on the related practices of the twentieth century authors.

In Chapter One, Kierkegaardian diagnostic preoccupations and authorial strategies are presented and contextualised, with emphases on the 'Individual', the 'Stages' and Indirection of Discourse. In Chapter Two Lawrence and Eliot are introduced in their wider cultural setting and Chapters Three and Four develop a relevant Kierkegaardian methodology-in-practice for reading some of Eliot's poetry. Chapter Five scrutinises passages from *Burnt Norton* as a text of progression-through retrieval. Chapter Six addresses the task of refining a method to engage with Lawrence through a Kierkegaardian approach to a quite different generic type of writer. Chapter Seven exploits the Kierkegaardian concepts of Repetition and his three Stages to inform a reading of Lawrence's most original novel, *Women In Love*. Chapter Eight reads late Lawrence, sometimes against Eliot, with a view to establishing the nature of Lawrence's final attempts to forge a religious discourse, paying attention again to Kierkegaardian insights. I conclude that through ingenious and dynamic strategies, within formidable constraints and limitations Lawrence attains a fitfully remarkable and, at best, strikingly original achievement of modern religious discourse. In Chapter Nine I draw my generalised conclusions about the value of Lawrence's and Eliot's work in the wider area of religion, language and meaning.

I have sought to ground critical readings of texts, sometimes deliberately employing the discipline of close reading, and within, where appropriate and accessible, the relevant patterns from the history of thought, that are attendant on modernity and its later modifications. Deliberately two contrasting later poets, Peter Levi and Jack Clemo, are given brief attention as 'readers' of Eliot and of Lawrence respectively, as a further intertextual conversation, poet-to-poet and one within a representative, but contrasting, wider religio-poetic world of discourse. Quite differing deployments of some of the primary texts of the Judeo-Christian tradition and of the issue of scriptural intertextuality in the ongoing debate about the constraint and value of communities with a shared linguistic and religiously epistemic base in modernity lead into my closing synthetic reflection that also, finally justifies the comparative approach of my study.

CHAPTER ONE

The Aesthetic and the Ethical in Kierkegaard

Introduction

There are major Kierkegaardian themes of controlling importance to this comparative critical study of three authors. The first of these is the Category of the Individual or Single Person, which became decisive in Kierkegaard's later writings, and which he saw as the necessary category for the realisation of the human *telos*, for *salvation*, in Christian terms. Secondly there are the Kierkegaardian Stages of Existing, presented and differentiated with considerable subtlety and nuance in the Authorship and explicitly and broadly classified as the Aesthetic, the Ethical and the Religious. The fully human project involved, for Kierkegaard, a realisation, within the experience of the self, of at least something of the consciousness attendant on each of these Stages. But this is an intricate, demanding and deviating process. Thirdly there is the issue of the expression of religious truth and whether, if it is possible at all, this can ever be *directly* communicated. In his authorship, Kierkegaard engaged with this last controlling theme through a variety of finely tuned modes of discourse, imaginative, assertoric and often an intriguing combination of each. These themes are expounded in more detail in the rest of this chapter.

1. The Individual.

The Danish *hiin enkelte* is more accurately rendered by the second alternative, 'single person', according to Ronald Gregor Smith (*LY* 11), for whom it is the preferred translation, since it avoids unhelpful associations with popular notions of bourgeois individualism. Kierkegaard's searching and purgative concept is far removed from this commonplace ascription and illuminates, through extended and multifarious protest, questions with which the universalistic historical sweep of the Hegelian dialectical project did not deal with required emphasis. It is not the purpose of this thesis to probe the Kierkegaard/Hegel relation in depth. I lack the required competence and this is not my goal.¹ It was the Hegelian intellectual and fashionable dominance as *zeitgeist*, mediated to him primarily in Denmark, and perhaps also via the critique of Schelling, that alerted SK to a sustained and multiform counter-dialectical protest, for which he derived some of the tools from Hegel himself in a kind of back-handed salute. However it was a personal spiritual insight (in the full sense of both terms) that informed his anti-totalising critique of the primacy of the universal idea, a critique profoundly applicable to societal, cultural and religious categories. Against 'system' he offered 'bits', not in order to espouse fragmentation for its own sake – that was to come later in modernity - but

¹ I have of course endeavoured to grasp the essence of the disagreement. In this I have been much helped in particular by the writings of the late Colin Gunton who constantly returned to the wider significant theological issues within the historical debate. See, especially, Gunton (1993: 147-9) and Gunton (1997: 190-5).

rather to draw attention to what he viewed as the only mode and pattern of fideistic and epistemological renewal allowable in his time and place.²

As a theologian, Gregor Smith may, with his preferred translation, be thought to be working within some form of the classic Patristic distinction between Person and Nature, frequently eroded in modern speech by the presumed equivalence, through usage, of the terms *personal* and *individual* and *persons* and *individuals*. In a particularly clear formulation of the essence of this theological distinction, the twentieth century Orthodox theologian, Vladimir Lossky, wrote:

[...] in a certain sense, individual and person mean opposite things, the word individual expressing a certain mixture of the person with elements which belong to the common nature, while person, on the other hand, means that which distinguishes it from nature...we admit that what is most dear to us in someone, what makes him himself, becomes indefinable, for there is nothing in nature which properly pertains to the person, which is always unique and incomparable. The man who is governed by his nature and acts in the strength of his natural qualities, of his 'character', is the least personal. He sets himself up as an individual, proprietor of his own nature, which he pits against the natures of others and regards as his 'me', thereby confusing person and nature. This confusion, proper to fallen humanity, has a special name in the ascetic writings of the Eastern Church - αὐτότης, φιλαντία or, in Russian *samost*, which can perhaps be best translated by the word egoism, or rather if we may create a Latin barbarism 'ipseity'. (Lossky 1991: 121-2) See also Merton (1963: x) and Williams (2003: 52-4)³.

In his Upbuilding Discourse published in 1844, 'To Need God is a Human Being's Highest Perfection', Kierkegaard writes with limpid clarity of the 'first self' and the 'deeper self'.⁴ This is such an important representative passage for understanding Kierkegaard on this point that I must cite a full paragraph:

When a person turns and faces himself in order to understand himself, he steps, as it were, in the way of that first self, halts that which was turned outward in hankering for and seeking after the surrounding world that is its object, and summons it back from the external. In order to prompt the first self to this withdrawal, the deeper self lets the surrounding world remain what it is – remain dubious. This is indeed the way it is; the world around us is inconstant and can be

² See Evans (1983: 18) for comment on the colloquial usage of the Danish *smule*. The title of SK's 'titbit' philosophical offering, *Philosophical Fragments*, 1844, initially planned to be published under his own name, tilts at the Hegelian metanarrative assumption, just as his much larger and thus ironic *Postscript* to this work, published in 1846, is *Unscientific* and thereby tilts at a terminological presumption.

³ Thomas Merton was the most famous, articulate and feted practitioner of the classical eremitical life in the twentieth century. Archbishop Rowan Williams completed his doctoral research in Lossky's theology at Oxford in 1975. (Short 2003: 29-30) The insight expressed above is quite central to Williams' ongoing understanding of personhood in society. See especially Higon (2004: 90-102).

⁴ The English rendition of the phrases is the same in Swenson (*ED* 158-9) and in Hong (*EK* 88-9).

changed into the opposite in any moment, and there is not one person who can force this change by his own might or by the conjuration of his wish. The deeper self now shapes the deceitful flexibility of the surrounding world in such a way that it is no longer attractive to that first self. Then the first self must either proceed to kill the deeper self, to render it forgotten, whereby the whole matter is given up; or it must admit that the deeper self is right, because to want to predicate constancy of something that continually changes is indeed a contradiction, and as soon as one confesses that it changes it can of course change in that same moment. However much that first self shrinks from this, there is no wordsmith so ingenious or no thought-twister so wily that he can invalidate the deeper self's eternal claim. There is only one way out, and that is to silence the deeper self by letting the roar of inconstancy drown it out. (From *Four Upbuilding Discourses* [EK 88])

Compare with Lossky again and the points of overlap (and the authenticating stylistic differences) are clear:

The individual, i.e. that assertion of self in which each person is confused with nature and loses its true liberty, must be broken. This is the root principle of asceticism; a free renunciation of one's own will, of the mere simulacrum of individual liberty, in order to recover the true liberty, that of the person which is the image of God in each one. (Lossky 1991: 122)

Kierkegaard must therefore be understood to be working at some form of a contemporaneous recovery of this classic tradition, whether consciously aware of this in the precise manner described above or not and within the range of what was available to him in his day.⁵ This also provided the basis for some kind of apprehension of collective humanity or of *society*. For example in his 1854 *Journal* entry, he makes what superficially appears to be a pessimistic observation about unfulfilled human potential:

The majority of men are curtailed "I's"; what was planned by nature as a possibility capable of being sharpened into an "I" is soon dulled into a third person. (*J* 248)

'Shades of the prison house.' The human potential is stunted: more often than not.

The Wordsworth citation is apposite, situating our discussion within the wider European era, that distinctive nineteenth-century *zeitgeist* within which Kierkegaard operated. In the brief Appendix to his *Romanticism and Religion*, an excursus the brevity of which belies its pertinence and insight, Stephen Prickett demonstrated through incisive cross-textual readings how an analogously Kierkegaardian form of 'Repetition' was existentially possible for Wordsworth and indeed how this process formed a *regular* pattern of reconstitution and empowerment for his imagination and life, underlying the

⁵ Kierkegaard was not ignorant of mystical literature or of its roots in the Church Fathers and in wider antiquity. See Pattison (2002b: 58-59).

movement of some of his most profound and meditative poetry.⁶ This *de facto* Repetition was for Wordsworth a process of moral and spiritual regeneration after recurrent bouts of ‘visionary dreariness’, states of mind and spirit that were brought about by powerfully negative events in his life and historical experience.⁷ Kierkegaard’s seminal aesthetic (or counter-aesthetic?) text and the non-ironic *gravitas* of high Wordsworthian verse are tonally and generically quite distinct but Prickett convincingly shows a profound strategic mutuality of relevance and illuminative insight and hints at the origins of this:

In this tension and questioning of the events of the past and their mysterious echoes in the present Wordsworth and Kierkegaard reveal common roots in a far older way of looking at history. (Prickett 1976: 276)

This, concealed beneath the surface of their writings, is the Biblical tradition of *typology*, prefigured in the intertextual process of redefinition within the Hebrew Scriptures themselves (in historically re-mediated themes such as covenant, exile and restoration) and in the emergent New Testament scriptures coming from within the older patterns, transforming them in that process and, through the subsequent and ongoing project of Christian liturgical prayer, constantly re-mediating them both as paradigmatic memory, assurance of faith and of reconstituted understanding and hope.⁸

2. Call, Striving and the Stages.

So, within and beyond the inauthentic and suffering self, there can and there must be a way upward. Martin J. Matušík, for example, argues for a positive *Kierkegaardian* insight as an attainable possibility and he describes this as *radical self-choice*, an assured standpoint that is both responsible and detached from any uncritical conformity or socialisation. This is a different but complementary configuration of the self from any unexamined norm, harnessing implicitly the Lossky tradition of insight. It is not part of an aggressive assertion of my interest or gain *against* that of another and it proceeds from a primary choice of value that I have made for myself, from within the core of myself and before any other choosing. The prior interests and decisions of others have not imposed it on me and it must precede any contribution to their true well being that I may make. The *individual* in this sense (not as in Lossky) begins with his given identity:

I choose myself, not *in abstracto* but as I already am. And yet this is not a choice of this or that tradition or this or that value-sphere but of myself as someone who is capable of responsible, radically honest choosing. Self-choice is qualitative for Kierkegaard; it modifies how I embody my choices but does not justify what I choose [...] nowhere do I meet the death of my responsible positioned agency of personal and social change. Although self-choice presupposes critical distance

⁶ See Prickett (1976: 268-278).

⁷ For Wordsworth, as Prickett notes, these were the French Revolution both in the disappointment of his once-soaring social and historical hopes, the attendant deep losses in his intimate life and friendships and also the mental illness of his sister, Dorothy.

⁸ For wider consideration of some consequences of this in 19th and 20th century thought and art see the first section of Chapter Nine of this thesis.

from the given social norms, this is no excuse for justifying positively private or authoritarian exceptions within the ethical and moral domains. To the contrary, self-choice operates as the condition of the possibility that I can think normatively and act positively in the public sphere. (Matušík 1995: 242, 244)

This quasi-acetic discipline comes with a price because, as a contemporary philosopher writes, there are occasions when:

[...] the comfort zone, belonging to a group, conforming to generally accepted ethical and social norms may represent a moral failure. Conforming to the status quo is a moral act and cannot be excused. There have been too many times throughout history when men and women have done exactly that. (Vardy 2003: 160)

This could not be said of Søren Kierkegaard, the apparently constricted nature of whose historical challenge and circumstances - in his own words (or in the words of his 'poet'): 'he suffered being a genius in a market town'⁹ - only serve to make the impact of the integrity of his critique and witness all the wider and more remarkable. Or so it would seem. No doubt my own hidden assumptions of value underlie such an immediate and unreflective response. Perhaps indeed it is an *aesthetic* one, self-gratifying or self-consoling, in Kierkegaardian terms. Most certainly it is an ideologically conformist (even world-historical?) one. What we *expect* in the way of impact and significance is indeed questioned by such a life and work as Kierkegaard's.¹⁰ In his case today both life and work constitute and furnish a serious international and major academic industry about which SK might well have been lucidly and ironically (and at times most unjustly) scornful.

For Kierkegaard we live according to our life-view, with development and growth perhaps occurring through the modifying and often astringent encounter between our working preconceptions and the ongoing discovery of our experiential truth. At the most basic level (but with infinite variety of sophistication) we seek merely to fulfil our talents and satisfy our urges, believing that this is the way to the attainment of our *telos*. The Kierkegaardian subject experiences an inherent frustration in this procedure and this may be managed by suppression and by the continuous changing pursuit of gratification, an adaptation of the external world that exists only to meet my needs. This constitutes, in barest summary form, what Kierkegaard calls the *Aesthetic* stage. It is possible, as a variety of Kierkegaardian pseudonyms attest in the writings, to maintain life at this stage

⁹ *POV* 'Conclusion' from *EK* 479. The complete text of *Point of View*, which I consulted freely at an earlier stage of this research, was not available to me at this later stage of revision. I therefore cite the Hong translation from their 2000 anthology, *The Essential Kierkegaard (EK)*. Wherever this occurs or where I cite earlier English translations (with no other explanation given) this is for similar reasons. As an external student I have had to borrow, return and amass resources, as I have been able.

¹⁰ Kierkegaard was always wary of the insistence on the ascetic as a religious or ethical requirement. See Walker (1985:176). My phrasing here is intended to draw attention to a commended, cultivated and astringent stance of critical alertness (that which, in fact, substantially underlies the classical *ascetical* intention also).

with immense sophistication. But just because ‘there is no wordsmith so ingenious or no thought-twister so wily that he can invalidate the deeper self’s eternal claim’ (*EK* 88), the underlying psychic condition of this stage is despair, because the true, deeper (and unrealised) self is not piloting the life. The growth or break-through to a different life-view, a more demanding, but also more unifying, purposefulness, may be heralded when this underlying bleakness is perceived and faced. In his early two-volume work, *Either/Or*, the first book is devoted to diverse, ingenious and wily delineations of the practice of existence in the Aesthetic stage. The author is one ‘A’ and the ‘editor’ is the pseudonymous Victor Eremita who has comically and fortuitously chanced upon the documents ready for publication. In the elaboration of his presentation, Kierkegaard is thus hinting at the labyrinthine elusiveness of the self through the writings of an author who keeps so well out of sight. ‘And what about Kierkegaard in all of this? He seems to have disappeared behind a series of personae.’ (Taylor 1982: 62)

3. Anonymity of the Cloister as Metaphor, Pose, Truth and Counter-Inspiration.

When he wrote this early work, Kierkegaard retrospectively noted that he ‘was already in a cloister’ and that this was ‘the thought hidden in the pseudonym’. In his critical biography, Alistair Hannay (Hannay 2001: 174-5) correctly relates this reference primarily to SK’s refusal to marry but the ‘monastic’ inference behind ‘Victor Eremita’ is deeper than that.¹¹ In Part II of the text of *Either/Or* Judge William remarks: ‘In our day the market value of the monastic life has fallen’ (*EOII* 328). SK’s unusual ‘calling’ had, as we have noted, to be outworked according to temperament and within the social and cultural options accessible to him. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* glosses *eremite* as ‘a hermit or recluse (esp. Christian)’ (*COD* 397). According to Hannay, SK’s pseudonym “translates literally as ‘Triumphant Recluse’ or ‘Solitary Victor’” (Hannay 2001: 174-5). His renditions, though verbally accurate and even biographically prophetic, miss the weight of this directly religious nuance. In 1854, when his own self-chastening and attendant growth had progressed much and he was both victim of, and embattled with, the ‘public’, Kierkegaard, striving as so often to unveil the hidden ideological prejudices of his age, made this rueful reflection:

[...] we may see what a direct lie it is to claim that our present life (direct continuity and conformity with ‘the others’) is superior to the monastery. (*LY* 31)

SK’s solitary life of writing, study and, yes, of prayer does indeed have certain monastic/eremitical features although this is largely unmediated by any visibly communal/religious allegiance.¹² There are no vows of obedience to others – the attested relation to ‘Governance’ is quintessentially Protestant - and certainly no vow of poverty.

¹¹ See Watkin (1997: 29; 34-35) for a helpful brief elucidation of this point. Pattison (2002: 138-53) agrees with my view and demonstrates, by a survey of the different levels of reception of *Either Or* in 1843, that some (not all) readers and reviewers perceived its fundamentally religious point.

¹² The humorous anti-*imprimatur* or revocation with which Climacus concludes *Postscript*, his *magnum opus*, (*CUP* 619) has, no doubt, multiple meanings and this is now one of them. Of course this statement of revocation primarily exemplifies SK’s strategic practice of space-allowing communication between ‘existing persons’. (*CUP* 263-4) See also Evans (1989: 22).

(He lived well and had spent all of a considerable family legacy by his death.) We are perhaps left (only?) with an unresolved orientation to chastity in the way of celibacy.¹³ Three centuries unfolding through post-Reformation, Enlightenment and Romantic cultures had erased in much of Protestant Europe any wider social memory of the earlier perceived seriousness and centrality of the contemplative life, which persisted, as it will do, but in undisclosed forms and without public accreditation. In such an age of extrovert learning and action and the misplaced conflation of wisdom (*sapientia*) with (university) knowledge (*scientia*), ‘forgotten’ learning and ways could be found only through a species of ‘developed’ subjective appropriation.¹⁴ If manifested they will be ignored, if too persistently manifested they will be opposed.

So the ‘manifestation’ is dialectically subtle and the centrifugal pseudonym in Kierkegaard’s authorship, the humorist Johannes Climacus, is ‘uncalled’;¹⁵ his ambitious epistemologically and existentially exploratory work is inspired by a ‘whim’. He becomes a writer, languidly and self-mockingly, to ‘make his mark’. He has neither ‘apostolic’ nor Hegelian ‘messianic’ inclinations, roaring ‘world-historically’ and bellowing ‘systematically’ (*CUP* 184).¹⁶ His self-deprecating account of his non-vocation is ‘almost like earnestness’, but note the farcical and ironic juxtaposition of St Paul’s (indirect) visionary claim with a scarlet facial hue.¹⁷ This affords a signal contrast to the immediately ensuing report of the Hegelian ‘breaking of the light’ on ‘Dr. Hjortespring’ or ‘Dr Deer-leap’, actually Professor Johann Heiberg, writer, academic and man of the theatre who described his visionary conversion to Hegelianism in 1824 in some retrospective autobiographical writings published fifteen years later. This Easter Day ‘illumination’ is mocked by SK/Climacus though Heiberg was admired by the younger Kierkegaard and mentioned in his 1841 dissertation as a master of irony, a poet whose literary-creative existence was congruent with his life, his named peers in this respect being Shakespeare and Goethe.¹⁸

It is a famous incident in Goethe’s *Faust* that gives SK in *Postscript* the pointed humorous parallel to Heiberg’s light-breaking moment, alongside a reduplicated Pauline one. He parodies the writer’s own account¹⁹ and contrasts with Goethe’s scene where Faust, having returned from an Easter Sunday walk, where he has been joined by a

¹³ The wording is quite deliberately open.

¹⁴ For German Idealism *Wissenschaft* (*scientia*) is the name for philosophy, not ‘science’ in our contemporary usage. See the translator’s note in Heidegger (1993: 437). Hegel’s totalising project and Kierkegaard’s antiphonal response are both aspects of a wisdom-quest. Pattison (1997: 52-5) summarises Hegel’s epistemology from the perspective of a Kierkegaardian and Heideggerian critique. For the association of ‘developed’ here see *CUP* 2 54-5.

¹⁵ See *CUP* 234. Here Climacus/Kierkegaard through pseudonymous self-referral almost breaks ranks: ‘... the call that I did follow came not to me, if you please, but to someone else; and even for him it was very far from being a call in the stricter sense. But even if a call did come to him I am still uncalled when I follow it.’

¹⁶ See *SW* 9 and the first section of my Chapter Nine here for a not dissimilar polemical view of Eliot’s..

¹⁷ The scriptural reference is to 2 Corinthians 12.1-5 when the apostle is, by consensus of commentators, rhetorically veiling a self-claim by reference to a third person.

¹⁸ See Malantschuk (1971: 206). Pattison (2002: 100-115) outlines decisive contrasts in the approaches and aims of Kierkegaard and of Heiberg.

¹⁹ For partial text of which see *CUP* 2 224.

strange black poodle dog, sits in his study, deliberating over the correct translation of λόγος from the first chapter of the Gospel of John into ‘the loved accents of my native land.’ (Goethe 1949: 71) Erich Heller has described this episode from *Faust* as ‘the scene [...] set for the hazard of modern poetry.’ (Heller 1961: 227) SK’s ‘such a poetic hero and such a poetic Easter morning’ (*CUP* 184) and Heller’s ‘Easter Sunday [...] one of the most lyrical walks of German literature’ match closely enough to suggest correspondence but Kierkegaard is not mentioned in Heller’s work here cited, though he may well be a discreet presence because some of his most serious concerns are certainly there.

By way of illustration, I refer back to a twentieth century critical dispute that indicates both the boundary-concerns involved here and the difficulty of locating the real issues for discussion because of controlling prior assumptions. In his still-important study, *The Truth of Poetry*, Michael Hamburger (Hamburger 1969: 12-15) forcefully attacked Erich Heller’s premises in the text cited and, indeed, his whole approach to poetry, belief and expectation. Hamburger is a justly respected poet, critic, scholar and translator but there is a determined maintenance of a conviction/point-of-view here, explicit in his assertion that ‘it may be that the aesthetic order will never again be re-integrated with a larger one, as Kierkegaard set out to do in Baudelaire’s lifetime. What is certain is that it can’t be done by merely holding Dante out as a yardstick for all and sundry [...].’ Perhaps not, but this last clause appears, notably because of the mention of Dante, to be an *anti-Eliotic* shot as well, Dante’s being Eliot’s poetic mentor *par excellence*. But Hamburger always greatly respected Eliot’s achievement²⁰ and his fundamental counter-aesthetic conviction (hypothesis masquerading as assertion) was rather more long-standing, even in 1969.²¹ For SK the ‘poetic’ – and he viewed himself as ‘a kind of poet’ – is a ‘dubious category’ that is unable fully, although it can be a near approximation, to apprehend the religious and/or live in actuality (the two are close equivalents). There is development of this view within Kierkegaard’s authorship. Thus Constantin Constantius in *Repetition* comments

²⁰ See references in Hamburger 1969 and in his autobiography (Hamburger 1973 - title from Eliot) also.

²¹ A comparable example shows. In my 1970 M.A. Dissertation (Rayment 1970: 75-7) I considered unsupported and critically not dissimilar assertions made by Hamburger about the true status of the Christian beliefs of the Orkney poet, Edwin Muir (Hamburger 1960), in the context of much other valuable critical discussion, always to be expected from that source. Hamburger’s judgement appeared to me, then and later, to proceed from a serious and poetically committed aesthetic insistence that has become assertively *dogmatic* in the popular sense of that word and with preconceptions, from outside, about what Christian commitment should mean. My own intuition about Muir, then, was later reinforced by a conversation about him with Canon (now Professor) A.M. Allchin in the late 1980’s. The extent and depth of Muir’s Christianity are publicly noted by Allchin, a scholar in theological and in literary disciplines, in his Marian study *The Joy of all Creation*. (Allchin 1993: 184-90) A further substantiating point about Muir from another quarter is that he was a declared favourite poet of Dr Stuart Blanch (1918-94), Old Testament scholar/expositor, and Archbishop of York (1975-83). See references in one of his books commending that poet’s ‘astonishing penetration into these ancient [Old Testament patriarchal] narratives’ (Blanch (1977: 84), in a chapter that takes its title from a famous poem of Muir’s. On the issues of Goethe’s scene from *Faust* and of Heller’s proposed ‘reading’ of modern European poetry, I accept the direction of Heller’s view whilst appreciating Hamburger, in particular for the consistent paradigmatic nature of his response that raises issues of such importance. I note in fairness that he (Hamburger 1969: 16) insists on the poet’s honest self-awareness of motivation. His is indeed an aestheticism that is stringently qualified by ethical and political insight, so that it does not correspond precisely to any Kierkegaardian category. But it does remain, still, a kind of aestheticism, an espousal of communicative art form that must privilege that category for its own sake..

‘from below’ on the Young Man’s aesthetic ‘emancipation’, his self-attainment as a poet who can contemplate the past not in actuality but ‘in ideality’, from a vantage-point in which ‘the religious founders, that is, becomes a kind of inexpressible substratum.’ (*R* 229). Climacus in *Postscript* is more explicit as he writes about the highest (Christian) form of religion, the actuality of the paradox-religious, Religiousness B:

The reason a religious poet is a dubious category in relation to the paradoxical-religious is that, esthetically, possibility is higher than actuality, and the poetic consists in the ideality of imaginative intuition. (*CUP* 580)

Hence a poetic presentation of the religious life is more attractively charming than the actuality, the thing in itself, much as an artistic unhappy lover’s evocation of erotic bliss can have compelling verisimilitude. The exceptional Christian and highest of the pseudonyms, Anti-Climacus, whose role it is to see the paradox and the division from the other side, emphasises too that it is an expression of an ideal truth:

His [the poet’s] relation to the religious is that of an unhappy lover, not in the strictest sense that of a believer; he has only the first element of faith - despair – and within it an intense longing for the religious. (*SUD* 78)

A ‘kind of poet’, yes, but not ‘a typical poet’, because Kierkegaard, writing in his own person ‘defines himself as striving in relation to what is being communicated’ (*PC* 294).

It is not my task, interesting though it would be, to compare the strivings of Goethe and Kierkegaard. But in his wonted gospel translation, Faust’s rendition of ‘Deed’ (‘Tat’) for λόγος (‘Wort’) comes to him only after being spirit-guided from the choice of ‘Force’ (‘Kraft’). This decision to move away from apparent origin in order to regenerate a perceived necessary emphasis causes, in Goethe’s text, the cartoon-comic apotheosis of disgruntled small poodle into be-fanged, demonic hippopotamus-like monster. After Faust’s defensive conjurations this grotesque epiphany in turn leads to the emergence of the urbane Mephistopheles in scholar’s guise, out of the spell-bound mist and from behind the stove! Such begins the devil’s work but veiled by comic grotesque after linguistic depth-probe, inspired by unbounded libertarian determination in academic guise.²² As Heller (1961: 33-55) has argued at length, it became Goethe’s eventual project, consciously or not, to ‘avoid’ tragedy. The circumnavigation was the price of the sustenance of the approximate harmony that he sought and could envisage. D.H. Lawrence’s avowed ‘great kick’ at tragedy, on the other hand, is really an evolving project sustained throughout *his* work, at least since 1912, and is a part of his own deep religious courage and impulse, as I shall show.²³ A kick is a frontal attack, not a detour, and it also involves ‘striving’.

²² As D.G. Rossetti noted in the 19th century, translation may remain the best form of commentary (cited in Thomas 2000: 168) but as Robert Frost noted in the 20th century poetry is what may get ‘lost in translation’. Frost’s ‘aesthetic’ comment applies to a great deal more than poetry, however, as, in true Kierkegaardian manner, he was well aware. See Scully (1966: 48-9).

²³ See especially Poplawski (1993: 62-76 and 179 note 14).

Kierkegaard strongly implies a similar critique of avoidance to the now-illuminated Hegelian Heiberg and he was soon after to spend much time (and three revisions) in critique of the *post*-Hegelian visions of Magister Adolph Peter Adler.²⁴ The totalising lure of an illusory and illicit ‘worldview’ could take diverse forms. However Climacus/Kierkegaard is contrastingly and self-effacingly humorous about his own authorial ‘calling’ and he writes about the object and inspiration of it – the high cost of yielding to that allure at the expense of faith – in a rather different tone. The defining scene of Climacus’s indirectly listening to the old man by his son’s grave lamenting with his little grandson in the country churchyard has a folktale pathos in its art-full narration in which the only humour lies in Climacus’s self-perception and self-presentation. The bereaved man – there are only grandfather and grandson left in the family now – gives a simple evangelical witness to his own faith and an accompanying lament that his son died faithless. The small child, awed by the solemnity of it all, is charged to promise that *he* will keep this faith lifelong. The old man ‘could not presuppose the maturity to understand and yet did not dare wait for the onset of maturity’ and his requiring an oath of the child is, we are told by Climacus, a ‘poetic’ improbability. SK’s literary versatility is manifest here as he introduces criteria of aesthetic and critical distancing that are, strictly, inappropriate to the dominant folktale genre of the recounted episode, which still retains its pathos, whilst through this dimensional overlay acquiring a further level of communicative thrust. Hence the beautifully told anecdote becomes a species of adult irony to the reader, a type of indirect communication, recalling strategies employed elsewhere by Kierkegaard, for example in *Fear and Trembling*.²⁵

This is reinforced by the ensuing disquisition in *Postscript* on the theme of the undesirability of adult ‘sacred promises’ as a warning-sign of the reduction of inwardness, a quality that is best demonstrated and retained by quiet self-dedication. Notably, Kierkegaard uses as illustration of his point the tragically ambivalent example of Brutus and the co-conspirators in the Caesar assassination-plot, an incident that itself shows an indirection of speech and act (*CUP* 240) in murderous context, but with actual appropriate textual warrant from Shakespeare.²⁶ And yet through this entire scene and reflection, the old man has unwontedly conveyed a summons, a general mandate to Climacus. The discourse that makes this plain has superb tonal equipoise:

Then I, too, went home. I basically understood the old man right away, because in many ways my studies had led me to notice a dubious relation between modern Christian speculative thought and Christianity, but it had not occupied me in any decisive way. Now the matter had its significance. The august old man with his faith seemed to me a totally justified individuality whom existence had wronged, inasmuch as modern speculative thought, like a monetary reform, made doubtful the proprietary title of faith. The august old man’s pain over losing his son, not only through death but, as he understood it, even more terribly through speculative thought, moved me deeply, and at the same time the contradiction in

²⁴ See Chapter Five *passim* for consideration of the further implications of this for SK and for wider critical concerns. Like Eliot (and the mainstream Christian traditions) he, too, was opposed to the inner voice.

²⁵ See *CUP* 236-9

²⁶ See *CUP* 232, note 344.

his situation, that he could not even explain how the enemy force was operating, became for me a decisive summons to find a definite clue. The whole thing appealed to me like a complicated criminal case in which the very convoluted circumstances have made it difficult to track down the truth. (*CUP* 240-1)

Note the multiple effect of the pointed fiscal and legal imagery and the equating of ‘speculative thought’ with final loss, the modesty of the ‘proto-detective’s’ still detached, but also assumed near mock-heroic role, a muted clarion call issued (indirectly) and heard or recorded by him more than a third of the way into the main text of *Postscript*. All this comes from a persona who is upward-looking but not, like Faust, upward striving. There is a point of arrest here: the pseudonyms Climacus and Silentio each view the sublime mountains of faith-commitment with an intricately detailed, searching, cool, not dis-loyal passion-without-affect much like the performances of almost-but-not-quite-human androids in some of our more memorable recent and contemporary science fiction movies.²⁷

4. The Ethical By-Way.

Two comments made by Kierkegaard/Climacus in *Postscript* about *Either/Or* will serve to preface some introductory comment on the important defining concerns of Part Two of this work. Firstly, we are told that, in this text, ‘the esthetic standpoint is an existence *possibility*, and the ethicist is *existing*.’ But it has also been remarked that ‘the inadequacy of *Either/Or* is that the work *ended ethically* ...’²⁸ To see this we go back to the point where, in Volume Two of *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous author, Judge William, expresses the essential insight for the movement beyond the Aesthetic Stage:

If I can lose the whole world without damaging my soul, the phrase “the whole world” must include all the finite qualifications that I possess in my immediacy, and yet if my soul is undamaged it is consequently indifferent towards them. I can lose my wealth, my honor in the eyes of others, my intellectual capacity, and yet not damage my soul; I can gain it all and yet be damaged. What, then, is my soul? What is this innermost being of mine that is undismayed by this loss and suffers damage by this gain? (*EOII* 221-2)

²⁷ The Shakespearian analogy here surely has to be with Ariel at the commencement of reconciliations in *The Tempest*, recounting and reinforcing the warmth of affections glimpsed to Prospero, in Act 5, scene 1, line 19, and his conclusion: ‘... if you now beheld them, your affections/Would become tender.’ His response to his master’s ensuing brief and quizzical question viz.: ‘Mine would, sir, were I human.’ (Shakespeare 1964: 113) show how near and how far he is. There are unbreakable restrictions to his empathy. Kierkegaard had the talent of a great enchanter amongst many other gifts and his pseudonyms are uncanny multiple refractions of our orientations, *humours* almost. See Ferguson (1995: 6-18) for some summary background of the roots and development of this view in European culture. SK’s characterisations are, however, more Jonsonian than Shakespearian.

²⁸ *CUP* 294-5 - italics mine in each citation. Throughout this thesis I shall use UK spelling of *aesthetic* (and cognates) in my own text, except when citing a Hong translation, when I shall retain the US form there used: *esthetic* (and cognates). This principle is followed in all other variants (e.g. *honor* in the citation following).

This recalls our opening considerations about the self. This vantage point of indifference to the 'whole world' (wealth, honour etc.) that can destroy the soul is reached by the decision to choose *myself*, to locate the integrity of this innermost being (the soul) and, in so doing, to accept a qualitative change in the understanding of its givenness. Such an acceptance results in a *transformation* of that self, which becomes governed, now, by ethical claim and constraint. This requires a movement beyond the pursuit of gratification, characteristic of the aesthetic state, towards what becomes, in fact, a reconfiguration of the self in response to a notion of the good.

In the opening section of *Either/Or II* the Judge William takes the institution of marriage as the paradigm of transition from the Aesthetic to the *Ethical* stage. For Kierkegaard the fact of our sexuality focuses our dual human nature as both physical and spiritual. The act of love (if it is truly that) meets both those areas of our need and expresses synthesis or unity of being. Eternal and temporal dimensions of the self are brought together and there is the possibility (which can - inevitably - *fail* to be realised) of the maturation of the unified spiritual person. In his discussion the Judge delineates the contours of romantic love with critical sympathy, chastening the misplaced and self-deceived idealist and rounding on the cynic. The finite, temporal, physical dimension of the self is necessarily prominent in all forms of sexual love. The ethical litmus test and the potential for growth lie in the consciousness and readiness of the subjects for the *eternal* dimension.²⁹ The possibility of genuine love's emergence from Romantic love lies in this propensity. (It is an Eliotic moment 'in and out of time' with awareness of past and future subsumed):

Although this love is based essentially on the sensuous, it nevertheless is noble by virtue of the consciousness of the eternal that it assimilates, for it is this that distinguishes all love [*Kjærlighed*] from lust [*Vellyst*]: that it bears a stamp of eternity. (*EO II* 21)

But it needs anchorage in order to sustain itself against the vacillation of mood and fortune. Without a basis of physical sustaining and continuity the *eternal* will wither in its defining capacity and only a temporal concern will be left: undifferentiating sensuality, or lust.

For love to have historical continuity, lovers must make the concrete choice of marriage. In so accepting a pledged and lasting responsibility for the immediacy of their affection the lovers transform it into a process of incarnated development and potential.

²⁹ This recalls the famous lines of that happily married man, Robert Browning, writing about: 'Infinite passion and the strain/Of finite hearts that yearn.' [Concluding lines from 'Two in the Campagna'. (Browning 1954: 54)] Spanning two other European countries, southern and northern, Browning's career (1812-1889) more than contained the duration of Kierkegaard's short life (1813-55). But there are some (non-biographical) similarities in concerns and in literary approaches that could make for interesting research. See the brief 'Introduction' by Ruth Etchells to her selection in Browning (1988: 6-8).

[...] the task is to preserve love in time. If this is impossible then love is an impossibility. (*EOII* 141)

Duty, through commitment undertaken, is the solvent that preserves and strengthens love in its faltering and hesitancy. The Ethical man is not ‘absorbed in mood’ with its ‘prodigious oscillations’ like the Aesthete. He possesses his own experience in such a way that it does not control him and he thus seems to be integrated with his ‘deeper self’. His is as an ‘examined’ life and this is:

[...] because he has chosen himself infinitely, he sees his mood beneath him [...] has a memory of his life [...] The mood of the person who lives esthetically is always eccentric because he has his centre in the periphery. The personality has its centre in itself, and the person who does not have himself is eccentric. (*EOII* 230)

There have been severe strictures levied on the Judge’s commendation of distinct and submissive gender-roles in marriage, in particular, and rightly, from female scholars.³⁰ For Gillian Rose, an exemplar to whom I shall return, the man-presentation, Aesthetic-become Ethical, is too personalised, too self-conscious for dialectical rigour, and the woman, still, beseeching, is too universal, ultimately little more than an idealised projection of masculine needs. Note the revealing reference above to ethical *man* (though of course this was at the time a pre-inclusive historical assumption in discourse, there is still a deal of *presumption* within it). Woman, seemingly, does not figure to attain. Such stereotypical terminology can be re-expressed only in abstract discourse. Rose (1992: 71-2) writes, citing SK’s coda text:

[...] both fail towards love-able-ness, ‘in’ but not ‘of’ the relationship that is replenished whatever its fate - Friendship of friendships, broken or fulfilled. The final word, ‘ultimatum’, confessing prayer -
by always joyfully thanking you as we gladly confess that in relation to you we are always in the wrong.

Hence the pseudonymous Judge (and his author) ground the ethical life in a *religious* context. Rose’s comment and the Jutland Pastor’s prayer to which it finally alludes (*EOII* 341), suggest an ironic undercutting of the all-sufficiency of the Judge’s position. For the Judge, it is true that God is both ground and sanction of ethical existence but it is the human who can achieve it: we have, in his explicit view, the ability to realise divinely-imposed duties. But with the sermon (note) that concludes *Either/Or* Kierkegaard typically undermines this dialectical certitude that he has carefully, pseudonymously presented. (It is a sermon as yet undelivered which adds its own dimension of comic irresolution.)

³⁰ See, for example, Walsh (1994: 121-125); and, especially, Hall (2002: 108-137). This is reinforced, from a different, more historical and also masculine gender perspective, by Pattison (2002: 132-136). For one among many helpfully appreciative summaries of some feminist responses to SK, see Berry (1995).

Such a strategy of dialectical undercutting is continuous throughout SK's pseudonymous authorship and is especially marked in the authorial perspectives of the seminal complementary texts, *Repetition* and *Fear & Trembling*, which appeared eight months after *Either/Or* and in the same year, 1843. The two 'authors' of these pseudonymous works, Constantin Constantius and Johannes de Silentio, write from contrasting perspectives. Constantin has a self-assured (but constantly undermined) 'psychological' superiority both to his protégée, the Young Man in love, and to his personal endeavours to achieve the re-integration that is the theme of the work. Johannes writes about Abraham and the Heroes of Faith in a manner of 'humble' appraisal but countermanded by irony of false seeming (as the *bourgeois* Knight of Faith in *Fear & Trembling* is a comic delineation of the impossible project of presenting heroic sanctity). The text of Johannes also has to hand a virtuoso range of literary reference and tone: *lyric* in the presentation of tale and eulogy and *dialectic* in relentless pressure of argument to fearful conclusion. Constantin, who presumes to instruct, does not understand, and is *constant* only in his comic amoral aestheticism and folly. 'Assured of certain certainties' - the nineteenth-century fictive 'matchmaker' tradition taken to burlesque - he is also one of D.H. Lawrence's 'ghastly obscene knowers', a non-participant in being, 'living and partly living'. Johannes, who, avowedly, *does not understand*, delineates primal religious mystery with such power and versatility that the portentously fearful silence of *Abraham*, lonely beyond judgement, is given memorable form. In *Fear & Trembling* the decisive authorial perspective is that of the Aesthetic focused on the Religious which it discovers in apparent transgression/denial of the Ethical or, at least, in passionate dispute with the finality of its claims.

Three Upbuilding (or Edifying) Discourses were also published by Kierkegaard on the same date as these two texts, 16th October 1843, but in his own name. This additional and 'external' counter-referencing of the authorship, placing both pseudonymous and 'direct' texts in tandem, is the pattern of production of Kierkegaard's dominant *aesthetic* writings up to *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* in 1846 and Evans (1983: 50) suggests that the *Discourses* may be 'the best guide or commentary to the *Postscript*, so striking are these parallels'. Indeed Kierkegaard/Climacus writes that the 'upbuilding is a wider category' [than the Christian],³¹ and *Climacus* muses whether Kierkegaard ('the Magister' - himself the named author) 'wanted to see how far one can go, purely philosophically, in the upbuilding.'³² In this he suggests strongly some kind of a Kierkegaard/Climacus affinity and thus neither pseudonym nor author claims to *exist* in the religious sphere, except in the sense of awareness of ethical and immanent demand. The issue of direct religious address in Kierkegaard is thus a more complex one than the taking of the *Upbuilding Discourses* at face value, at least in their entirety.³³ There is also of course a subdivision within religiousness in the *Postscript*³⁴ and I begin a preliminary consideration of this below.

³¹ This is the sense of his sentence here: I have had to reverse sequence. See *CUP* 256.

³² *CUP* 256.

³³ Pattison (2002b: 148) observes that 'Rarely in the discourses themselves does Kierkegaard speak simply and directly in his own voice.'

³⁴ The key passage is *CUP* 555-61.

5. Religious Stages or Spheres: Towards Directness.

The reduction of indirectness in Kierkegaard continues thereafter but with different emphasis as the explicit category of the Religious comes to the fore in the authorship. Avowedly, Kierkegaard's aesthetic writings are a strategy of pointed *deception* for which he had a rationale of defamiliarisation:

[...] when in Christendom a religious author whose total thought is the task of becoming a Christian wants to make it possible to make people aware, [...] he must begin as an esthetic author and to a certain point he must maintain this possibility. But there must be a limit, since it is being done, after all, in order to make aware. (*POV* 53)

The *Discourses* are an accompanying aid to this awareness; they are, unkindly, described by one commentator as 'written in a kind of pietistic underfelt' (Poole 1989: 9), by contrast with the often self-mocking erudition of the contemporaneous texts. This is a 'different' voice indeed and one that was coded by some earlier scholarship as unambiguously direct. Thus Holmer wrote:

They spoke the real author's conviction and were the purpose of Kierkegaard's lifework. Whereas all the rest of his writing was designed to get the readers out of their lassitude and mistaken conceptions, the discourses, early and late, were the goal of the literature. (*ED* 17)

A more descriptive and less disputable assessment is that of the Hongs that through their coterminous publication SK is ensuring that the 'pseudonymous aesthetic-ethical writings' had 'explicitly ethical-religious counterparts.' (*EK* 84)³⁵

Because there was actually little secrecy about the composing identity behind the unfolding authorship (known usually to be Kierkegaard by anyone who took real trouble to find out) these contra-stylistic works attributed to the first person add to the overall dialectical complexity. We noted above the consonance of this genre with the stance of Climacus in *Postscript*. Indeed for Fergusson (1995: 188) the *Discourses* 'should not be viewed as a form of direct communication but rather as a different form of indirect communication.'³⁶ For SK himself, at the terminus of his aesthetic writings, Religiousness A, or imminent religion, proceeds from an inner aspiration, which may

³⁵ Fenger (1980) famously contested Kierkegaard's assertion of a consistently religious intention in his authorship, which he regarded as a retrospective revision, but he is scarcely sympathetic to what is most serious in SK. He has had successors but Evans (1983), Walsh (1994), Watkin (1997) and Pattison (2002) are representative of those who dispute this view and I believe that in this they are correct.

³⁶ Fergusson's point here is important but requires modification. His argument is that these texts are prescribed to be spoken aloud (see *EK* 493) and that hence 'speaker' becomes 'author'. This is because as the *reader* thus speaks, his or her own voice adopts the text, becomes its author and the real 'penman' disappears. However the 'middleman' role of *interpreter* needs also to be introduced, as with a musician with a score or an actor with a poem, and then this helpful insight can stand.

even constitute an *interrelation*, within the self. C. Stephen Evans helpfully and accurately summarises this as ‘human consciousness and experience apart from supernatural revelation.’ (Evans 1989: 12.) The category of the *Upbuilding* serves to indicate the self-stripping process that is fundamentally necessary for the apprehension of the Religious Stage and its *ethical/aesthetic* function is to provoke what may be only the embryonic awakening of that *ascetic* consciousness. (CUP 560-61) The most eloquent, persevering, ironic and subtle embodiment?/expression of this condition is of course SK’s pseudonym Johannes Climacus, who equivocally occupies the inter-categorical boundary-line as well as being, in his exemplification and discourse on that method, the most direct of the indirect communicators. It thus becomes clearer that neither the tortuously Aesthetic nor the austere Ethical is the true summit of human achieving or *telos*. The third Kierkegaardian stage (the Religious, in Immanent and in Paradoxical degrees, Religiousness *A* and Religiousness *B* respectively) is only reached by a kind of return, almost boomerang-type of movement and Climacus/Kierkegaard admits that the complexities of this and of the stations within it are necessarily confusing.³⁷ But there has been further repetition in the authorship, differently nuanced in the aesthetic mode, before these stages are delineated.

Beyond *Either/Or II*, the undermining of Judge William’s own ethical certitudes is tonally present - as uncertainty - in his subsequent, more inward discussion of marriage in *Stages On Life’s Way*. Gillian Rose noted fixity of the understanding of woman in *Either/Or II*. Indeed it is only by such an objectification - and distortion of *personal* gender - that the psychophysical synthesis here offered as the way to the attainment of the goal of the human project can be so simplistically attained. In essence it is a variation of an *I-It* relationship (Buber 1958: 16-17). There may be deeper disquietudes here than are dreamt of in the Judge’s philosophy. Perhaps neither man/woman nor – still more - *God* may be subsumed into an ethical code that we can follow/manage, views that are made more explicit in *Fear and Trembling*. There are more seemingly intractable aspects to true ethical transformation and the relation of the Ethical to the Religious *is* one of dependence, as the Judge himself constantly implies.³⁸

But it is not *as* he implies and here, later, Eliot and Lawrence must also, albeit contrastingly, converse. Kierkegaard’s nuanced delineation of these boundaries, fictively and conceptually, is the third controlling theme of my investigation.

Repetition, a novella of sorts to which we shall return, develops this line of argument, notably where in an aesthetic ‘movement’ (or ‘transformation’) the Young Man uses the text and image of the Biblical Job as imaginative transference, perhaps as a strategy of denial/avoidance of commitment to woman. Ironically and tellingly, he manipulates a

³⁷ See Come (1995: 283) for further explication.

³⁸ The word *dependence* may awaken the theologically literate to the name of F.D.E. Schleiermacher, for whom the experienced sense of our absolute *dependence* furnished the basis of Christian doctrine. For positive analogies between Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, who studied him, see Pattison (2002: 120-136 and 2002b: 36-7)

religious text.³⁹ But Judge William himself, in *Stages*, a work published two years after *Either/Or*, argues for marriage in a manner different from his former presentation, inwardly rather than institutionally, and he himself discerns a subtly subversive challenge, latent within matrimony, that can undermine the ideal attainment of the Ethical life. Because the choice of marriage is paradigmatic, the latent disquiet applies generally to the maintaining of life in the Ethical sphere requiring, as it does, not a negation of the Aesthetic but a (problematic) synthesis of the Ethical (/Religious) with the Aesthetic. This is significantly different from the ploy of *Repetition*.

‘The Banquet’, the opening section of *Stages on Life’s Way*, is a series of speeches on the model of Plato’s *Symposium*, the protagonists of which are determined, after the earlier Ethical attack of *Either/Or II*, to reinstate the Aesthetic category as a more nuanced *control* of personal existence, as, in some sense, itself a reflective *choice* and thus more effectively responsive to the puritanical ethical critique of Judge William, who himself becomes more tellingly exposed by the process. Aesthetic versions of the erotic and of woman, sophisticated and misogynous, are presented by a series of pseudonymous speakers. Images of romantic love are selected, projectively described, (not experienced) and then *interpreted*. This change of approach is significant because the illusion of *self-choice* in the *aesthetic*, romantic-love-sphere is further developed and apparently reinforced. Significantly, the *Seducer* has the last word. ‘The entire setting is constructed to provide for male pleasure by ruling out interaction, interruption and consequence.’ (Hall 2002: 143)

In his ‘Observations About Marriage’ from *Stages On Life’s Way*, a Married Man (the Judge) writes:

In paganism there was a God for erotic love but none for marriage; in Christianity there is, if I may say so, a God for marriage and none for erotic love. Marriage is, namely, a higher expression for erotic love [...] The difficulty is that as soon as one thinks of God as spirit, the individual’s relationship with him becomes so spiritual that the physical-psychical synthesis that is Eros’ potency easily disappears, as if one were to say that marriage is a duty, that to marry is a duty, that this then is a higher expression than falling in love because duty is a spiritual relation with a God, who is spirit. Paganism and immediacy do not think of God as spirit, but when this is taken for granted, the difficulty is to be able to preserve the qualifications inherent in the erotic so that the spiritual does not burn them up and consume them but burns in them without consuming them. Thus, marriage is threatened with dangers from two sides; if the individual has not in faith placed himself in the relationship with God as spirit, paganism haunts his brain as a

³⁹ This is not the view of Pattison (2002:227) who writes of ‘a complete giving over of the self to the text and to the idea that holds sway in the text.’ However I would argue that it is an immature un-formed self that does this and that in this immolation the Young Man effectually misreads the generic nature and intention of the text of *Job* itself. Hall (2002:98-99) summarises the essential discrepancies, the extent of Job’s losses and the Young Man’s lack of penitence. This is a way of avoiding the self-destructive action of Goethe’s Young Werther and the deliberate paralleling is thus a part of Kierkegaard’s ironically anti-Romantic polemic.

fantastic reminiscence and he cannot enter into any marriage; and on the other hand neither can he do it if he has become totally spiritual; even if one of the latter type and one of the former type were married, such falling in love or such a match is no marriage. (*SOLW* 100-1)

The necessarily ideal internal tension, ‘burning without being consumed’, is despite the Judge’s subsequent argument in the text, inherently disruptive of Ethical balance. In the writings and the life of D.H. Lawrence there is an incessant grappling with these very issues and frequently from within the same, but reversed, perspectival nexus of concern: the interface between what may indeed be broadly characterised as Pagan and Christian - with the attendant problem that Kierkegaard described as ‘immediacy’.

I resist the misleading temptation to define these two major terms. The reflected, unexamined and received view in our culture at most social levels was, perhaps from the early Middle Ages to the late nineteenth century, that Christianity had fulfilled and eclipsed what it understood to be paganism. Paganism was ‘the childhood of religion’, Christianity ‘the thing full grown’ as C.S. Lewis, (Lewis 1965:188) a scholar of the past lucid in his present, wrote in his twentieth-century autobiography. For Climacus/Kierkegaard, in the mid-nineteenth century, paganism is a sensationalised direct relation of immediacy between human and divine ‘as the remarkably striking to the amazed’, which is the ‘untrue relation’ of ‘idolatry’.

This is a poor substitute for the ‘true relation’ with God and the christianisation of culture has necessarily emphasised the impossibility of any true knowing of God in this way. But the era in modernity in which SK wrote had mislaid, in his view, the necessary dialectic of indirection that makes communication between spirits possible, whether human-to-human or human-to-God, and a still greater impoverishment had thus, in his view, resulted (*CUP* 245-7). This is the pathos of the ‘rote knower’ in Christendom who has no experiential awareness of that about which he speaks and, lacking even the pale shadow, the vestige of a ‘fantastic reminiscence’, of the pagan option, is still more ‘without God in the world’. The reference to Ephesians 2.12 recalls John Henry Newman’s comparable citation, in the famous passage from the final section of his *Apologia* about ‘the dreary hopeless irreligion’ in a blighted human landscape. (Newman 1924:242) Newman’s pointed rhetorical flourishes read very differently from the sententiousness and irony of, respectively, William/Climacus/Kierkegaard but the target of each writer’s rhetoric is at bottom the same, a condition of amnesia, a cognitive/fideistic impasse due to what each called ‘sin’ and which SK defined.⁴⁰ (*PF* 50; *CA* 116-7) In Chapter Five I pursue further for my purposes the often-made comparison between Newman and Kierkegaard. Here I note that Gordon Wakefield, discussing the spiritual world of Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, in which ‘Pagan had been [said to be] dead many a day’, from a later twentieth century view, writes: ‘Pagan is far from dead three hundred years later and is both a mentor and a menace to Christianity.’⁴¹ It is in this dual role that I shall read Lawrence.

⁴⁰ SK’s ‘rote knowledge’ is perhaps here not far from Newman’s ‘notional assent’.

⁴¹ Wakefield (1994a: 84); Bunyan (1965: 100, interpolation mine).

Note that the final source for SK's cited image, 'burning without being consumed', that so implies sustained equipoise in passion is a biblical one (Exodus 3.2).⁴² Unusually Kierkegaard is here deploying a mode of scriptural inter-textuality somewhat in the manner of Lawrence, particularly as shown in some of the early chapters of *The Rainbow*. In that text it has been well noted that 'Christian terminology is not integrated within the consciousness of the characters, but is usually added after particular experiences as a part of narratorial comment that helps to define the experience as religious.' (Poplawski 1993: 90) Analogously but distinctively, the Judge's conceptually conveyed meanings and intentions are here disclosed through the scriptural image as a false note of sacral straining. At bottom there is no real development in the Judge's perception of partnership in marriage and indeed as Hall (2000: 141) succinctly states; he 'believes himself joined to another but in the course of his treatise reveals his dependence on a feminine fabrication of his own spinning.' Thus the Judge, too, is, ironically disclosed at a point of near-Aesthetic arrest.

In the following section of *Stages*, 'Guilty?/Not Guilty', Frater Taciturnus concludes his discussion of the existence-spheres in admirably concise manner:

The ethical sphere is only a transition sphere, and its highest expression is repentance as a negative action. The esthetic sphere is the sphere of immediacy, the ethical the sphere of requirement (and this requirement is so infinite that the individual always goes bankrupt), the religious the sphere of fulfilment, but, please note, not a fulfilment such as when one fills an alms box or a sack with gold, for repentance has specifically created a boundless space, and as a consequence the religious contradiction: simultaneously to be out on 70,000 fathoms of water and yet be joyful. (*SOLW* 476-7)

Note the echo of the Jutland Pastor's Sermon at the end of *Either/Or* 11.⁴³ We may prefer to be always in the wrong - at the nadir of the Ethical - but here Kierkegaard makes his most famously fearsome and figurative statement of the existential life of faith. The conclusion of the discussion of Judge William's position in the two texts is that the Ethical stage needs the Religious - in practice. The Ethical is a rational, ordered life according to universal principle but it is parasitic on the Aesthetic (which is primary) and incomplete before the Religious (by which it is required to be subsumed). There is thus a hierarchy of Stages or Spheres, but with movement back and forth and the Ethical is the intermediate and dependent Stage.⁴⁴ For interpersonal, relational *living* to flourish from within its inescapable vulnerability, there is need for the Religious Stage.

⁴² 'Final' because there is, of course, a deal of supplementary accretion of meaning intended here.

⁴³ *EO* 11 355: '[...] if the punishment that the iniquity of the fathers had called down came upon you, you are still happy - because in relation to God we are always in the wrong.' The earlier translation (*EO* 11a 355) actually renders 'be joyful'.

⁴⁴ For a helpful introductory discussion of the interrelationship of the Stages see Ferguson (1995: 111).

The essential flaw in the argument that duty to God is comprehended by obedience to his ethical dictates is developed by Johannes de Silentio, 'author' of *Fear and Trembling*, an Aesthetic outward enquiry into the experience of true faith.

The whole existence of the human race rounds itself off as a perfect, self-contained sphere, and then the ethical is that which limits and fills at one and the same time. God comes to be an invisible vanishing-point, an impotent thought; his power is only in the ethical, which fills all of existence. (*FT* 68)

In this *dialectical lyric* the Binding of Isaac, the Akedah, is imaginatively and conceptually represented as acute theological/ethical dilemma. God calls Abraham to go beyond the ethic of the Universal and become an Exception: he is commanded by God to transgress the Universal taboo, to slay his son. Either Abraham is a murderer and thus far removed from the designation *father of faith* or there is a *teleological suspension of the ethical*. The logic is starkly explicit: the Universal and the Absolute are not coterminous. Johannes, of course, writes from within the Aesthetic sphere, looking upwards and not striving. Lyric empathy creates dialectical tension: *I do not understand Abraham*. But what is achieved in this most memorable of Kierkegaard's works is the decisive destruction of the notion of human self-sufficiency as human *telos*. The Absolute may require the Exception. Kierkegaard's authorship is an outworking of what is involved in the progressively authentic expression of the relational self within the multiple cultural languages available to him. I shall contrast the ways and media in which Lawrence and Eliot each chart forms of this journey, which is, for Kierkegaard, both an integral and an intricate one, from Self-Will to God's Will, from works of egoistic wilfulness to Works of Love.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Hall (2002: 51-82) reads *Fear & Trembling* presciently alongside the later (1847) text.

CHAPTER TWO

Going Public

1. Meeting D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot.

Kierkegaard expresses the outworking of this journey in his later writings, which climax in his own passionate exposure, as an actor *engagé*, without a mask, on the public dialectical stage. Here we note also his developed and prescient critique, which became a lived realisation, of a mass age where a monolithic *Public* and its (print) media push destructively against the realisation of this human *telos*, this becoming an 'I', which we have previously discussed.¹ The anti-communal critique is outlined in the third section of Kierkegaard's review of Thomasine Gyllembourg's *The Two Ages* where he proceeds to move from his consideration of a specified text towards much wider concerns:

The public is not a people, not a generation, not one's age, not a congregation, not an association, not some particular persons, for all these are what they are only by being concretions. Yes, not a single one of these who belong to the public is essentially engaged in any way. For a few hours of the day he perhaps is part of the public, that is, during the hours when he is a nobody, because during the hours when he is the specific person he is, he does not belong to the public. Composed of someones such as these, of individuals in the moments when they are nobodies, the public is a kind of colossal something, an abstract void and vacuum that is all and nothing. (*TA* 92-3)

The (print) media both create and are sustained by the public, in reciprocal deluded relation, purveying distorted images of the real. Kierkegaard writes:

Together with the passionlessness and reflectiveness of the age, the abstraction 'the press' (for a newspaper, a periodical, is not a political concretion and is an individual only in an abstract sense) gives rise to the abstraction's phantom, 'the public', which is the real leveller. Apart from its negative implications for the religious life, this too can have its significance. (*TA* 93-4)

This 'levelling power' is central to Kierkegaard's argument. He sees it as demonically destructive of human flourishing, growing in influence and fervour in proportion to the decline of real thought, 'the decay of an age without passion'.

Both Lawrence and Eliot engaged with analogous concerns, and at depth, when the phenomenon of a mass society, discerned so astutely by Kierkegaard, had further developed. Both later authors – often less witty as preachers,² though both aptly

¹ See Chapter One *passim*.

² The term 'preacher' only applies to parts of the *oeuvres* of each of our writers and that not notably the best, certainly in the cases of Lawrence and, still more, of Eliot. Lawrence the essayist is frequently a preacher; indeed it is one of his characteristic and recognisable voices. The guarded Eliot is much less so but he can don the mantle ill-fittingly, notably in the dying fall of *After Strange Gods*.

described on occasions by the generic term - would affirm the substance of SK's biting observation:

Sluggishness crosses its legs and sits there like a snob, while everyone who is willing to work, the king and the public official and the teacher and the more intelligent journalist and the poet and the artist, all stretch and strain, so to speak, to drag along that sluggishness which snobbishly believes that the others are horses. (*TA* 94)

Contemporary scholarship continues to debate the seeming individualism and the proto-elitism of Søren Kierkegaard's views, but there also seems to be broad agreement in uncovering at least the seedling of an emergent communitarian vision, perhaps even retrospectively organic to the whole, in the later works of his authorship.³ The basis of this is the essentially religious insight that the roots of our individual identity cannot be fathomed through our interaction with other incompletely realised human selves. Knowledge of being known and loved by God is the only basis for self-acceptance, self-flourishing and self-giving.⁴ We are all 'levelled' by grace. (*WOL* 385-6) The accoutrements of our transient individualistic guise or pose must be worn loose because

[...] when the dissimilarity hangs loosely in this way, then in each individual there continually glimmers that essential other, which is common to all, the eternal resemblance, the likeness. (*WOL* 87)

Thus, for example, our western, late-modern solipsism of consumerism and possessiveness, without tie or any obligation that is not mercantile and frequently deferred, and the continuing historical process of the merge/surrender of the self with or to the communal *anomie*, are each critiqued by Kierkegaard's developed position. Recently Liz Carmichael has argued for an existentialist/personalist reading of Kierkegaard from *Works of Love* despite the austerity of its recurrent emphasis on agape-love as a primary direction. She distinguishes (Carmichael 2004: 158-9) a line of affinity from Kierkegaard to the Lutheran scholar-bishop Anders Nygren but gives weight to the equally discernable and deductively stronger emphasis that she espouses.⁵ She could, but

³ For differing perspectives on this see Come (1995: 372-80) and Matušík (1995: 239-264). They are able to agree that individualism as naively understood does no justice to Kierkegaard's position, and Cone highlights defects and limitations in his developed view. Pattison (2002b: 62) notes the counter-solipsistic tendency in 'a growing secondary literature on the subject'. Whilst implicitly accepting this direction, Pattison wisely counsels against 'assimilating Kierkegaard too easily to contemporary models of the liberal-democratic self.' (2002b: 64) The opening paragraphs of my first chapter show my own agreement with this view.

⁴ For this point see *WOL* 58 and also Evans (1995: 84-86).

⁵ Anders Nygren's 1930-6 two-volume *Agape and Eros* was both influential and controversial in Protestant thought throughout much of the last century. Burnaby (1938: 14-19, 92-4, 121-5, 276-7) effectively critiqued Nygren on linguistic and on theological grounds from an Augustinian perspective within the wider tradition. Carmichael concludes similarly. See Carmichael (2004:163-171) where she continues the debate with reference to de Rougemont, D'Arcy and Simone Weil. See also Moltmann-Wendel (2000: 97-99), writing on the same topic but with an explicitly feminist, even polemical, tone that contrasts with Carmichael. Moltmann-Wendel (fashionably?) blames Augustine for the terminological and categorical divorce but also cites the strong linguistic arguments against Nygren's division of categories. Incurable

did not, claim some authority for this from George Pattison (Pattison 2002b: 172, 211) who similarly rebuts a concurrence of position between Nygren and Kierkegaard on grounds taken from a wider contextualisation of nuances of loving within the authorship as a whole, despite similarities between the two that can seem strong on the surface. Thus Kierkegaard offers a still-valid and humane stance for responsible social engagement and critique ‘in earnest jest after post/modern existential and social undecidability.’ (Matušík 1995: 259)

This ‘earnest jest’, integral to his authorship, became Kierkegaard’s lived, prophetic parable, a cohesive statement that can be meaningfully brought alongside the life-work of D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot. Both these later authors wrote about (different) visions of community and both recognised the in-built hostility towards those visions of modern (industrial) life. Lawrence’s utopian aspirations and non-conformist roots nourished the quest for his Rananim or ideal spiritual group but he never found it. (This was partly perhaps because other people could always be hell and would not do what he said.)⁶ Eliot, adoptive son of the Church of England, conservatively idealised its parish system on a quasi-bucolic nostalgic model.⁷ The fact of its inaccessibility, less frequently acknowledged in his prose that so often seems to assume a cryptic but never fully disclosed standard or bar of judgement, is *not* so avoided in the seemingly more honest rhetoric and certainly all-pervasive awareness of ‘unpropitious times’ in his poetry. Both men (Lawrence and Eliot) differently dreamt Utopias (nowhere places), a fact that does not nullify the potential value of any negative critique that they may have proffered or even the partial retreat from actuality that gave birth to each man’s dream. They were culturally and spiritually prescient writers who did not engage socio-politically with the force fields of *action* (as opposed to those of ideas) in their time. Each was, perhaps, looking - in different directions and certainly distinct ways - for a ‘new, doubtless very different, St. Benedict’.⁸

Platonist, and thus ultimately *contra* Kierkegaard, as she was, in spite of manifest empathy, Iris Murdoch’s dictum that ‘Plato saw Eros, when purified, as the highest form of spiritual energy, but lower unredeemed Eros as a plausible tempter.’ (Murdoch 1993: 127) is a correct non-dualistic emphasis.

⁶ See the hauntingly inconclusive sequence in the Ursula/Birkin dialogue that concludes *Women In Love*: ‘another kind of love [...] obstinacy, a theory, a perversity, [...] it’s false, impossible [...]’ (WL 481) Artistically this expresses both the commencement and the goal of the quest.

⁷ I think that this is a just response to *The Idea of a Christian Society*, which appeared in the fateful year of 1939, and which I read as a text of closely argued and soberly dignified pessimism. Indeed Eliot explicitly rejects (ICS 31) an idyllic rural portrait. But his counter-organisational proposals (ICS 34-44) have admitted of no realisation and his actual intuition at the time was the shuddering prospect (ICS 38) of a ‘Dark Age’, a premonition that he shared with Lawrence. The ‘Postscript’ (ICS 87-8) from ‘a distinguished theologian’ has decidedly Barthian characteristics in its key third paragraph, namely the primacy of *Gospel* and the fallacy of *religion*. Donald Davie sympathetically but critically considered Eliot’s schema in his essay ‘Anglican Eliot’. (Walton Litz: 1973)

⁸ See the famous parenthetical last sentence of Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue*. (MacIntyre 1981: 245) Citing this work, the present Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks writes that “the self of modern social theory ‘has no necessary social content and no necessary social identity [...] (it) can then be anything, can assume any role or take any point of view, because it *is* in and for itself nothing.’” Sacks (1991: 16) ; MacIntyre (1981: 30) See also Sacks (1995: 62-68). This debate is still conducted, sometimes at a crude level of categorist scientism, which would not be permitted in other areas of philosophical discourse. For example: ‘There is just a brain, a dull grey collection of neurons and neural pathways – going about its business. The illusion of self is merely a by-product of the brain’s organisational sophistication.’ (Syed 2005)

2. Monastic Analogies

Despite the recent and persuasive demonstration by Pattison (2002) that Kierkegaard was dialogically engaged and critically immersed in his contemporary culture at a multiple variety of levels, Davies's (2001: 88) summary statement that SK 'lived as an alien within his own society' must still be true at a deeper level. It relates to the 'Monastery In the World' that Watkin (1997: 29) takes as a metaphor for his 'given' perspectival vantage point, one of loneliness deepened into solitude, a progression that may ultimately be – from the viewpoint that I am here canvassing - healthy to undergo:

The movement from loneliness to solitude, however, is the beginning of any spiritual life because it is the movement from the restless sense to the restful spirit, from the outward-reaching cravings to the inward-reaching search, from the fearful clinging to the fearless play. (Nouwen 1980: 35)

Terms like 'spiritual life' and 'spirituality' are increasingly fluid and open notions in our culture and era, the kind of linguistic imprecision and slippage that Eliot, in particular, would have deplored.⁹ In citing Henri Nouwen, 1932-96, here I allude to a Roman Catholic writer who had been a successful author, preacher and lecturer in the United States and in France but who chose to spend the last ten years of his life at the L'Arche Daybreak Community in Toronto, as chaplain to the mentally disabled and their assistants, his summative 'existence-communication' re-enforcing, interpreting and validating his published words.¹⁰ My thesis must engage with such diverse and problematic terrain because of the Kierkegaardian exemplification that lies at the heart of my investigative criteria.¹¹

For Kierkegaard, only a religious vision, in first-order terms, is adequate ground for any true associational living, a notion that lies, with appropriate differentiations, at the roots of Lawrence's and of Eliot's views also.¹² A true community is difficult to achieve but it may be possible, at a cost, and it must be distinguished from the 'untruth' of the 'Crowd'.¹³ Biographically extended adult experience of associational living was something at which the historical solitary, Søren Kierkegaard, had even less practice than had Lawrence or Eliot, no doubt. 'Loving one's neighbour is a thankless task!' he wrote, but also alleged that an inward cleaving to God, in the endeavour to understand all subjectively appropriated experience, will both disclose the neighbour and constrain to

⁹ See Johansson (1994: 208-251) for an evaluative representative discussion of this fluidity from the western Protestant viewpoint.

¹⁰ Nouwen taught at Harvard and Yale Divinity Schools, and at the University of Notre Dame. See Read (2002) for basic biography. For the important Kierkegaardian notion of 'existence-communication' which underlies my remarks at this and other stages, see *CUP* 379-80.

¹¹ For comparison with the most famously public English-speaking monastic solitary in the first half of the twentieth century see my *Appendix D* on Thomas Merton.

¹² SK's notorious suspicion of human association in his late work is pragmatically critiqued by Come (1995: 374-6).

¹³ *POV* 109: 'The crowd is untruth. Therefore Christ was crucified...'

love. (*WOL* 87-8) What Eliot later wrote about Charles Baudelaire has an obvious applicability to Kierkegaard as well:

And being the kind of Christian that he was, born when he was, he had to discover Christianity for himself. In this pursuit he was alone in the solitude which is only known to saints. To him the notion of Original Sin came spontaneously, and the need for prayer. (*FLA* 77)

There is submerged autobiography (and aspiration) on the part of Eliot here too, I suspect, ('only known to *saints*', a term that is here used with unusual and interesting application to the French poet) but the Baudelaire/Kierkegaard juxtaposition, which we have already noted in another source,¹⁴ actually does have historical and cultural warrant, because the contextual parallels between each nineteenth-century writer actually go deeper than, superficially, we might assume. Pattison (2002: 22) writes:

In reality the evidence is that although Kierkegaard's Copenhagen was clearly not Baudelaire's Paris, the same dynamics that created the Paris of the 1860's were already active in the Copenhagen of the 1840's, and were, perhaps, all the clearer because of the smaller scale and relative backwardness of the latter.

'The mass was the agitated veil; through it Baudelaire saw Paris.' (Benjamin 1970: 164) Both nineteenth century writers experienced a deepening solitude in the modern city, even as their awareness of its possible meanings also deepened. 'His business was not to practice Christianity, but – what was much more important for his time – to assert its *necessity*.' I cite Eliot's interesting discrimination about Baudelaire (from *SE* 384) that could without much difficulty be referred to Kierkegaard too. Indeed the continuing scholarly (and more general) interest in SK's sociological probe in Part Three of *The Two Ages* (see *TA* xi) would not be feasible if Pattison were not fundamentally correct here and also that he was not commenting on a still-wider trend.¹⁵ Pattison (2002: 64) describes *The Two Ages*, in a context of comparison with other similar Danish writings of the time, as 'one of the twentieth century's seminal texts'. Some forty years later, in 1921-2, the cultural and international circumstances that gave birth respectively to *The Waste Land* and *Women In Love* (both also seminal texts) involved a similar, no doubt

¹⁴ We have already met the analogy in Michael Hamburger. (Hamburger 1969: 15) Ludwig Wittgenstein, cited in Rees (ed.) (1984: 87), famously, described Kierkegaard as a 'saint' and, in the same context, 'easily the most profound thinker of the nineteenth century', (a designation which, with variations, we shall meet more than once). But Wittgenstein used language with a very different intentional precision to that of Eliot the combative literary journalist of 1928. What Kierkegaard 'meant' for Wittgenstein is helpfully discussed in Crowder (1999) and it was a very great deal. He learned Danish in order to read Kierkegaard accurately and for no other reason. (Crowder 1999: 365) Interesting formal and linguistic analogies between the two are considered in Roberts (1995). For accurate summary of the nature of Eliot's literary debt to Baudelaire and of their affinities in other respects see Starkie (1960: 34-6; 166-7). It has been suggested that Eliot's spiritual and literary sponsors at his Christian Baptism were George Herbert and Charles Baudelaire (the printed source of this observation is not now available to me).

¹⁵ See Walter Benjamin's representative observation: 'The crowd – no subject was more entitled to the attention of nineteenth century writers.' (Benjamin 1970: 162)

accentuated, isolation of the urban subject, albeit engaged from differing strategies and with wider, because fictive, frames of reference.¹⁶

An excursus (and indulgence) in some biographical cross-referencing here will demonstrate a general convergence-within-difference on the issue of solitude and association in Søren Kierkegaard, D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot. Lawrence's formative early background in Eastwood was much closer to full associative living in personal and cultural characteristics than were those of the other two men and this led to certain marked outgoing features of conviviality that remained constant throughout his career. Worthen (1991: 106-12) gives due weight to the social and gregarious expansion of Lawrence's nature as a teenager from the beginning of his sustained contacts with the Chambers family at the Haggs Farm. Later this was modified, because of the vicissitudes of his career and, by 1922, 'living so much alone with Frieda', he had become, though, 'above all', continuing 'lively' (a most important qualification), 'an alien, antagonist, subversive, exile, a traveller who no longer belonged in England, or Europe, or anywhere ...' (Kinkead-Weekes 1996: 718)

Lawrence had his own evolving 'doctrine' of personal identity, forged in part by the exigencies of his culture but also, no doubt, by this progressively distinctive condition.

One realm we have never conquered: the pure present. One great mystery of time is terra incognita to us: the instant. The most superb mystery we have hardly recognised: the immediate, instant self. (From 'Poetry of the Present: Introduction to the American Edition of *New Poems* [1918], TCP 185)

There is an unmistakably *existential* note to this manifesto-like utterance but it is the reference to the *self* that concerns us here. There are many examples in Lawrence of attempts fictively to realise levels of selfhood that are deeper, literally more *substantial*, than the results of any mere process of socialisation. The climactic emergence of Ursula, from Chapter X onwards in *The Rainbow*, as the progressive last and third Brangwen generation, into the world of a fully contoured modernity and out of the last vestiges of inchoate 'blood-intimacy',¹⁷ is frequently and justly cited as illustration of this. For Ursula this search for a fuller consciousness necessarily involves a rejection, a shedding of inherited, perhaps unrealised and certainly nostalgic Christian faith, the so-called 'Sunday world'. (R 264, 265)

Well then, there was a week-day life to live, of action and deeds. And so there was a necessity to choose one's actions and one's deeds. One was responsible to the world for what one did.

¹⁶ Eliot acknowledged a complex debt to Baudelaire, without whom, he wrote in 1944, he would not have been able to write himself. Much of this is effectively summarised by Starkie (1960: 162-7). She makes two important points in respect of my project in that Baudelaire, in his poetic technique of the elevation of the mundane, is the 'main influence' on *The Waste Land* and that Eliot was one of the first (in England *the* first) to appreciate the religious quality of Baudelaire's work.

¹⁷ For the phrase in originating context see R 11.

Nay, one was more than responsible to the world. One was responsible to oneself. There was some puzzling, tormenting residue of the Sunday world within her, some persistent Sunday self, which insisted upon a relationship with the now shed-away vision world. How could one keep up a relationship with that which one denied? Her task was now to learn the week-day life.

How to act, that was the question? Whither to go, how to become oneself, how to know the question and the answer of oneself, when one was merely an unfixed something-nothing, blowing around like the winds of heaven, undefined, unstated.

In this passage the authorial presence orchestrates a first-and-third-person interior monologue that accentuates the thrust of outgoing direction and endeavour against the innate but weaker counter-tendency to remain. The characteristic word and phrase repetitions and the self-subverting effect of the scriptural echo of John 1.7-8 in the last sentence, textually enact the outward drive beyond indecision and the lessening tenacity of cultural roots now lacking soil for growth.¹⁸ For Fernihough (1995: xxii-xxviii) Lawrence places the continuing development of individualism at the thematic centre of *The Rainbow* under a fundamentally all-encompassing Nietzschean tutelage. There is thus emancipation from communal generational life, itself both breaking down just as it is at times commemorated in elegiac manner. But there are other, more intricate 'emancipations' in Ursula's journey through modernity and, ultimately, to *impasse* and then apocalyptically rendered hope. Fernihough charts critically and convincingly Ursula's dalliances with lesbianism and the Women's Movement (Lawrence does not of course conflate these two) as mediated through friendships formed and discarded on her way to a mystical and trans-societal individualist stance.

This stance is both anti-capitalist (which, in Lawrence, read as 'anti-industrialist') and also against communal political merging (there is a link between depersonalised industrialism and mass movements) and in ways superficially resonant of Kierkegaard but owing more to later nineteenth century German thought and to the socially and politically alienated climate of much intellectual life in England in the very early years of the last century. As is often remarked Lawrence's elopement and subsequent marriage, in July 1914, to Frieda Weekley (née von Richofen) accessed for him personally a complex aristocratic Teutonic cultural stream.¹⁹ But Lawrence effectively focuses as, so often, relationally, the near-lethally competitive striving of individuals and the desensitised evasion or fear of growth through the delineation of the failed courtship of Ursula by

¹⁸ There is here some limited similarity of stance and even some tonal resemblance to Kierkegaard's well-known early Journal entry at Gilleleie, August 1, 1835 (*EK* 7-12) that likewise crystallizes a young adult's moment of resolve. But for the Dane in a dense but fundamentally one-dimensional first-person account, there is a concern to penetrate to the lived essence of Christianity, whereas Ursula/Lawrence seeks personal authenticity in a different and wider sphere beyond the 'Sunday world' of a parochially acculturated Christendom.. Both recognise life's innately forward momentum for all who would own their existence

¹⁹ Fernihough (1995: xix-xx) notes that Lawrence dedicated the novel to Frieda's sister, Else Jaffe, freethinking feminist and intellectual and in important ways so opposite to her differently liberated sibling. Kinkead-Weekes (1996: 807, endnote 114) summarizes the fascinating and, and at the time, controversial details surrounding this, notably Lawrence's desire for a German dedication, understandably refused by the publisher in 1915.

Skrebensky. See the movement through *egoïsme à deux* (R 281), through the beginnings of disillusion (R 438-9), and the terrible climax (in more than one sense of the word) charted in R 442-7, in which Skrebensky is 'obliterated', 'buried' (the word is repeated four times in one post-coital sentence of R 445).

Michael Bell comments in words which, abstracted for their source, could be as much about Kierkegaard as Lawrence. He notes that:

Modernism represents a double crisis in the historical construction of personal identity [...] Yet the rise of the individual as a value went along with its increasing disintegration as a category [...] For Lawrence [...] perhaps the most important aspect of this is his puritan insistence that the dissolution of the category only makes the responsibility of the individual even more vital. (Bell 2001: 183-4)

A 'necessary angel', perhaps? Certainly, as another great (and unclassifiable) modernist, wrote, and the very late Lawrence discovered, 'I must impale myself on reality'. [Wallace Stevens in Stevens (1959: xxiv)] Yet here, as Lawrence recognised in the expressive language of his late poetry, the self as agent becomes passive and borne, not self-propelling, it leaps (perhaps) and is held.

Paul Murray cites a recalled conversation in 1949 between T.S. Eliot and a friend discussing the 'solitary' in the work of Kierkegaard and of Eliot's Kierkegaardian point made and noted that as '[...] moderns, we must speak of a desire to attain faith rather than its possession.'²⁰ Concerning the impenetrable, ruthlessly private T.S. Eliot, biographers and acquaintances concur about a veneer of polite reserve and detachment, in part masking inchoate complex feeling. Ackroyd (1984: 22) is representative here. Seymour-Jones (2001: 579-80) writing with a primary biographical interest in Eliot's first wife, is sharper about these features and, necessarily, unsympathetic.²¹ 'Yet there is a discerning comment of a friend that while his clothes were English, his underclothes were American.' (Wakefield 1994:167) Professor Christopher Durer wrote, in a reminiscence beginning from an encounter with Eliot in 1950, that:

[...] for Eliot England was always a never-never land, something like Agatha Christie's St. Mary Meade but considerably less real. He accepted its social order and the class structure, invariably identifying himself with the English upper

²⁰ Murray (1991: 150). I refer to his citation of Alessandro Pellegrini, 'A London Conversation with T.S. Eliot', trans. Joseph Frank in *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. LVII, No. 2 (April – June, 1949), pp. 287 –292, which I have not been able to consult in the original.

²¹ Actually she is devastating, in a way. Only a still-to-be-realised 'Cambridge'-type multi-volume researched study of Eliot's life, such as Lawrence has now received (1991-8), might begin the quest for a truly judicious understanding and that must be for years hence, if ever. Meanwhile the fine and just concluding sentences of the third Cambridge/Lawrence volume (Ellis 1998: 537) speak for Eliot and, more than may be sometimes realised, for the era of Kierkegaard also. Surprisingly (?) fictive evaluation may indeed be more nuanced and kind than either partisan biography or prurient journalistic thrust: see for example the remarkable first novel of Martha Cooley, *The Archivist*, that shadows scholarly research into Eliot as backcloth to her own exploratory theme. (Cooley 1998)

classes, and seeing more substance in their rites and conventions than most upper-class Englishmen. Hence Virginia Woolf's words uttered at the end of the First World War and echoed by various members of the Bloomsbury Group, that Tom was really very nice despite his "four-piece suit," held good for the rest of his life. And successive generations of poets and intellectuals found Tom, or Mr. Eliot as he became to many of them, also very nice despite his "four-piece suit." All his life T.S. Eliot wore his "four-piece suit" with relish, both literally and metaphorically, but this did not prevent him from showing to the world his more human side. (Durer: 2001)

He was a 'master of the anonymous'. [Marianne Moore, cited by Kenner (1965: x)]

Lyndall Gordon, whose project throughout is to envision Eliot as confessional spiritual writer, makes a memorable and slightly debunking observation that: 'He was a loner in the American tradition of cranky loners.' (Gordon 1988: 235) But this basic perception has proved fertile. Brooker (2002: 130) reviewing Childs (2001) notes, perhaps in implied agreement at some level, that: '[...] Eliot is best understood as part of American intellectual history running from Puritanism to Pragmatism.' In the same place she writes that 'in *Four Quartets*, Eliot writes beautifully of the return to one's first world, of arriving at the place from which one started and knowing the place "for the first time." These lines are typically associated with Eliot's return to Europe, with his decision to be buried in the church of his seventeenth-century ancestors in East Coker, but they could justly be associated with the poet's return to America.' (Brooker: 2002: 131)

The American roots behind the English overlay always played their part in the perceived Eliotic reserve just as they have accounted for some of his serious misreading of the differently puritanical Lawrence, as F.R. Leavis noted in 1955 (Leavis 1964a: 317-23).²² But Eliot's, more than most, is a case of appearance obscuring reality, a perhaps-necessary visual elision of the actual self. If, as Lyndall Gordon has argued, he sought but did not find the status of saint in his life, in his art he has shown something both of the inevitable complexity and seemingly self-cancelling elusiveness of modern religious discourse and its roots in traditions that reach far back in time.²³ Nearly half a century ago,²⁴ Hugh Kenner (Kenner 1969: 36) wrote about 'the Eliotic pseudo-person' and indeed it is as if the public self-presentation of T.S. Eliot²⁵ reflected something intrinsic to the art.

No other writer's verse has inspired so tenacious a conviction that it means more than it seems to. Certainly no other modern verses so invade the mind, attracting

²² See *Appendix E* for fuller comment and background on Eliot/Lawrence/Leavis assumptions. Leavis' own critical championing of Lawrence, progressively from the 1930's onwards, was the fruit of a deeply personalist and counter-Eliotic tendency at more than one level, so often substituting self-evident (?) quotation for close reading. It attained its commanding role in transforming the posthumous reception-history of Lawrence's work partly by the process whereby a conjecturally strong implicit voice of the author was adopted and publicised by a strong explicit voice of the critic.

²³ Tinsley (1979) finds this feature within the *New Testament* itself.

²⁴ Kenner's groundbreaking study of Eliot, which is still of value, was first published in the USA in 1959.

²⁵ '... literally and metaphorically ...' (Durer 2001.)

to themselves in the months following their ingestion reminiscence, desire and speculation. Eliot deals in effects, not ideas; and the effects are in an odd way wholly verbal, seemingly endemic to the language [...] (Kenner 1969:4)

For Christopher Ricks (Ricks 1988) Kenner is the prime ancestral critic of Eliot with whom to engage (only three names occupy more references than Kenner's in the index to that most allusive of Eliot commentaries, *T.S. Eliot and Prejudice*, and these are William Shakespeare, Henry James and Ezra Pound). To Ricks we owe the most nuanced account of Eliot's 'Englishness' that I have read and he uses the hostile (Irish) C.S. Lewis as a well nigh perfect foil to demonstrate the necessary subtleties of this. (Ricks 1988: 197-9)

Kierkegaard had some analogous personal and authorial concerns. A notable illustration of which can be seen in the ironic shifts that he makes within the narrative strategies of *Fear and Trembling*. The dramatic immediacy of Kierkegaard's ethico-religious theme in this text must never obscure the fact that it belongs firmly within the aesthetic stream of his authorship. The pseudonymous authorial voice mimetically realises the grandeur, enigma and terror that the response of faith, exemplified in Abraham, can adduce but his generically diverse meditations and analogies, lyrical and dialectical, are a series of approach-shots directed at an ineffable silence to which we in turn are directed by his name. As Hall (2002: 52-3) has noted, Kierkegaard's citation from Hamann between title page and preface 'implies that the message of the text is itself deceptive'. Careful attention to this work nullifies any impression of a one-dimensional rendering of the fideistic sublime.

For example John Riches (Riches 2000: 64-7) contrasts Kierkegaard's 1843 *literary* reading of the Akedah story with the *visual* one of Rembrandt's 1655 etching of Abraham and Isaac in which the embracing angel's restraining gesture of protective tenderness dominates and gives an overarching directive of loving providence to Isaac's submission and to Abraham's bewilderment. Placed alongside this gloss from an earlier Protestant century Kierkegaard's artistically layered and ultimately astringent treatment is indeed quite different and Riches (2000: 67) writes persuasively about its fidelity to 'something of the strangeness and provocative nature of the original story'. But he also strongly implies a monochrome reading of Kierkegaard/Silentio through the lens of biographical retrospect and, though not uncommon in the reception-history of this text, such an understanding is incomplete and cannot suffice. In the 'Preliminary Expectoration' that follows his 'Eulogy on Abraham', Silentio describes his fruitless quest to 'find a single authentic instance' of a Knight of Faith, although so veiled, necessarily, is the phenomenon that such instances may in fact ('every second person') be common. (FT38) So he goes on to 'imagine' such a figure mock-heroically, preceded by acrobatically caricatured gesture of recognition:

"Good Lord, is this the man, is this really the one – he looks just like a tax-collector!" But this is indeed the one. I move a little closer to him, watch his slightest movement to see if it reveals a bit of heterogeneous optical telegraphy from the infinite, a glance, a facial expression, a gesture, a sadness, a smile that would betray the infinite in its heterogeneity with the finite. No! I examine his

figure from top to toe to see if there may not be a crack through which the infinite would peek. No! He is solid all the way through. His stance? It is vigorous, belongs entirely to finitude; no spruced-up burgher walking out to Fresburg on a Sunday afternoon treads the earth more solidly. (*FT* 39)

Iris Murdoch situates a brief but invaluable discussion of this figure within her apposite comments on the interdependence and intermittent repulsion of the religious and the aesthetic. (Murdoch 1993: 124-33) Unable to comprehend the eulogised, lofty and biblically remote Abraham, Silentio creates this anti-romantic bourgeois incarnation of a 'hidden' spiritual mountaineer, but he has then expressed a different version of the heroic in the familiar guise of the unlikely one.²⁶ 'It is difficult to talk eloquently at any length upon a religious subject without employing the consolations and charms of art.' (Murdoch 1993: 126) Difficult, inevitable, but dangerous, as the former will from time to time seek and need to purify the latter, perhaps to the point of repulsion. The magnificently and diversely eloquent *Fear and Trembling* actually defamiliarises the religious to a point of almost vanishing. In the end something altogether different may be required. Eliot's prescriptive lines from *The Rock* (*CPP* 159) that:

It is hard for those who have never known persecution,
And who have never known a Christian,
To believe these tales of Christian persecution.

might have been written for the pondering of the later Kierkegaard.

4. Kierkegaard and Barth: with some Lawrencian and Eliotic Parallels.

The influence of Kierkegaard on Karl Barth's early-published theology is very great, even primary.²⁷ SK's earlier contestation of the Hegelian totalising assumption became a sort of paradigm for Barth in his own profoundly critical engagement with the nineteenth century theological inheritance that formed him.²⁸ For Barth, this legacy:

[...] carried through on a massive scale the assimilation of Christianity to the prevailing culture of Europe and sought to justify it as part of its full flowering [...] by making its own theological task subsidiary to the general and major task of civilisation and culture, it failed to take theology seriously as a matter to be pursued for its own sake, as having a subject-matter rational and thinkable in itself

²⁶ The genre is as old as David confronting Goliath and continues fertile in narrative, film etc.

²⁷ Torrance (1962: 44) wrote: 'Theologically and philosophically it was undoubtedly Kierkegaard who had the greatest impact upon him, far greater than the actual mentioning of his name, in the *Romans*, for example, indicates.' This comment from a pioneering expositor and translator of Barth is authoritative and Barth's later distancing from his formative guide does not reduce the force of its claim.

²⁸ To realise that he possessed a high degree of empathic identification with this formation and context is crucial for our understanding of Barth. (Torrance 1962: 30) Such was also the case for Kierkegaard and, indeed, for Scheiermacher. (Pattison 2002: 136) The latter is correctly perceived, with all genuine and deserved respect, as the precipitating great antagonist of the early Barthian project. (Avis 1997: 47-9) Torrance (1962: 83) contrasts deftly Kierkegaardian/Barthian and Hegelian dialectical approaches under the criterion of *humility*, 'the only wisdom we can hope to acquire'.

and to be investigated in the light of its own interior logic and necessity [...] The subjection of the Christian message to the interpretation of a general philosophy of the world and of life, and its assimilation to the development of western culture, so deprived it of its essential character and so thoroughly secularised it, that it became easy to regard it as but a phase of human evolution and then, as the human spirit marched on, as an anachronism to be tolerated in the interests of historical culture or to be put away as a useless survival of the past. (Torrance 1962: 58-9)

The Kierkegaard who had earlier understood and so emphasised from within his own complex and diverse authorship the Christological counter-cultural *σκάνδαλον* at the heart of faith and had drawn attention through his received authorship and in his wider polemics to its aesthetic, ethical, apostolic and societal consequences in bourgeois Christendom was an early guiding spirit for the later distinctive labours of the Swiss master. Barth learned much from Kierkegaard and never denied the debt. The ‘qualitative distinction’ between God and humanity, Christianity’s ‘ability to shock’, these were the fatefully deleted emphases that Barth picked up from his early mentor. (Barth 1962: 88-9) However his later distancing from SK and his perceived views show also both a difference of purpose in wider theological emphasis, and a failure to see the actual range and balance of Kierkegaard’s concerns. For a fuller demonstration of these points see Julia Watkin. (Watkin 1997: 99-101).

Dr. Margaret Masson’s research (Masson: 1988) into the Congregational religious influence on the early writings of D.H. Lawrence has demonstrated that the intellectual and ideological range of the sermons and discussion-groups at the Eastwood Congregational Chapel, frequented by Lawrence and his young circle in the first decade of the twentieth century, were themselves (inevitably) informed by unconscious assimilated beliefs of the cultural/progressive kind adduced by Torrance as those to which Barth so critically responded in the same era. Her findings should be complemented by Worthen (1991: 169-79) who emphasised and discussed Laurence’s own changing religious awareness at that time. The English writer’s own later crisis-response to cultural backcloth of the First World War in *Women In Love*, was informed by a depth of imaginatively realised critique that the contemporary Swiss Barth and his earlier Danish mentor would have appreciated even if in matters of detail and approach they would have undoubtedly differed and perhaps failed to comprehend. It was the Barth who was avowedly indebted to Kierkegaard who wrote in 1921:

The simplicity which proceeds from the apprehension of God in the Bible and elsewhere, the simplicity with which God himself speaks, stands not at the beginning of our journey but at its end. Thirty years hence we may perhaps speak of simplicity, but now let us speak the truth. For us neither the Epistle to the Romans, nor the present theological position, nor the present state of the world, is simple. And he who is now concerned with truth must boldly acknowledge that he cannot be simple. In every direction human life is difficult and complicated. (Barth 1968: 5)

Complexity and difficulty of narrative and of character interaction are qualities of Lawrence's *Women In Love* that will be further examined. The author's requested 1919 Foreword to the novel (WL 484-6) is a fascinating and near-contemporaneous document for cross-comparison. 'We are now in a period of crisis,' wrote Lawrence, 'Every man who is acutely alive is acutely wrestling with his own soul. (WL 486) Like Barth, Lawrence (as Eliot in *The Waste Land*) seeks primarily to elucidate and express, here artistically, spiritual *cause*, that which brought into being the catastrophe of 1914-18. What had caused the war continued to be more virulent thereafter. Stevens (2001: 58-9) records a contemporary recollection of Lawrence's refusal to see the end of the war as any kind of progress to a better world and see also Kinkead-Weekes (1996: 481, 506) for further corroboration of this view. In the same 'Foreword' Lawrence had written: 'I should wish the time to remain unfixed ...' (WL 485) Hugh Stevens has convincingly demonstrated, by pointed reference from the text, that the historical *locus* of *Women In Love* is immediately pre-First World War (Stevens 2001: 58), but Lawrence is seeking to get to the wider meaning of the 'bitterness of the war', and thus the war itself is 'edited out' of his explicit narrative.²⁹ This combination of timelessness with recognizable social and fashionable anchorage is appropriate form for the wider application that Lawrence's artistic missive intentionally conveys. So, in similar vein, Barth in his 1918 Preface to the First Edition of his *Romans* avowed that 'my whole energy of interpreting has been expended in an endeavour to see through and beyond history into the spirit of the Bible, which is the Eternal Spirit.' (Barth 1968: 1) Stevens makes the equivalent point about Lawrence so incisively that I quote his own words:

However accurate this apocalyptic strain in Lawrence's writing and political commentary might appear with hindsight, its value does not lie in its analysis of international politics, but in its acute and troubled perception of diseased human relations and of what Lawrence calls a 'disintegration' of the human self. The novel's power derives in part from its poetic merging of this troubled realm of intimacy with a picture of global chaos ... (Stevens 2001:59)

The title *Women in Love* does not prepare the reader for what follows in the text, just as Barth's *Romans* violated accepted conventions of scriptural commentary. A disclosure or revelation, a trans-historical *apocalypse* in the primary sense,³⁰ is what both writers intend. Having it both ways and in a sense not explicitly intended by the later Eliot, they are 'in and out of time'. (CPP 190)

For Kierkegaard, the Aesthetic, the Ethical and the Religious stages of human emergence interrelate, interchange and sub-divide. *Repetition* (1843) is paradigmatic. Kierkegaard's concept (or hope) of Repetition humanly makes possible a new start, the restoration of a broken integrity. Essentially this is the coming-to-oneself, the religious dream-aspiration of Paradise Regained, but Kierkegaard's novella/study is variously nuanced and ironic and within its parameters there can be disagreement as to the admitted possibility or

²⁹ Lawrence in his novels never fully parted company with the realistic tradition although some of the tales are different.

³⁰ For this see Arndt and Gingrich (1952: 91-2).

impossibility of the 'movement'.³¹ Without the category of the Leap, a movement beyond the current situation but not necessarily to the Religious Stage, it means nothing. *With* this it is central to the Kierkegaardian individuation-process, the progression through the Stages. It is also an interpretative resource for reading, amongst others, cardinal aspects in the works of D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot.

Always veiled, the poetry of the earlier Eliot speaks through ironic *personae* to engage what sometimes appear to be strikingly similar concerns to those of Kierkegaard. Note the bathetic juxtaposition that undercuts the would-be melodramatic climax to the Lazarus 'epiphany' in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. (CPP 16) The fragmented and sometimes disembodied selves of *The Waste Land*, as we shall see, are in a state of spiritual petrification, pinned butterflies that cannot even flutter and about whom a shifting authorial presence is chillingly ironic with a sub-Kierkegaardian humour:

'My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
Under my feet. After the event
He wept. He promised "a new start."
I made no comment. What should I resent?' (CPP 70, ll. 292-299)

Note the displaced downtrodden heart of the (literally) detached sceptical observer, who *may* (we cannot be sure) be a victim of the weeping penitent in 'The Fire Sermon'. These examples should be contrasted and compared with the progression to the passages of near stasis and the multiple 'turnings' of Sections I, III and VI of the presumed centrepiece, *Ash Wednesday* (CPP 89-99) and still more with the later 'Wisdom' passage in 'East Coker', Section II, (CPP 179) in which a Koheleth-like voice predominates over other modifying yet conflictual tones. There is *some* observable increase in directness of discourse in the temporal progression of Eliot's poetry, but it is far from simple or complete. He had his own clear understanding of indirect communication, as this 1933 observation demonstrates:

The chief use of the 'meaning' of a poem, in the ordinary sense, may be (for here again I am speaking of some kinds of poetry and not all) to satisfy one habit of the reader, to keep his mind diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him: much as the imaginary burglar is always provided with a bit of nice meat for the house-dog. This is a normal situation of which I approve. [From 'The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism'. (Cited in SP 88)]

In the authorship of Lawrence, quantitatively so much more than that of Eliot (but not of Kierkegaard) the trajectory of development through repetition is, for example, mirrored within the narratives of courtship and marriage in *The Rainbow* and by contrast in the speech-patterns, notably, of 'trapped' characters in *Women In Love*. It is also present in a

³¹ Biographical factors intervened and caused a modification/mutilation of Kierkegaard's text. When Regine Olsen, his former fiancée, became engaged to be married again, Kierkegaard revised the concluding part of his plot. The young man does not commit suicide: he is granted an aesthetic repetition; he becomes a poet with a possibly open future. Constantius, the pseudonymous author, despairs of the possibility of his own dogged attempts at repetition, but comically. See *FT* and *R* 'Historical Introduction', p. xx.

different and abiding mode of iteration throughout his authorship, in the consistent but mutating, sometimes irritable and, usually, suggestively idiosyncratic, quarrel, not so much with Christianity, *pace* Graham Hough (thought that is there)³² but with *scripture*, as it was for him an all-pervading and once-authoritative incubus. A very late writing, posthumously published, describes this vividly:

From earliest years right into manhood, like any other nonconformist child I had the Bible poured every day into my helpless consciousness, till there came almost a saturation point. Long before one could think, or even vaguely understand, this Bible language, these “portions” of the Bible were *douched* over the mind and consciousness, till they became soaked in, they became an influence which affected all the processes of emotion and thought. So that today, although I have “forgotten” my Bible, I need only to begin to read a chapter to realise that I “know” it with almost nauseating fixity. And I must confess, my first reaction is one of dislike, repulsion, and even resentment. My very instincts *resent* the Bible. (A 59)

Supremely Lawrence achieves a fusion of this abiding preoccupation with other vital and integrated sources in some of his *Last Poems*. This is less completely attained in the experimental fictions, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and *The Escaped Cock*, and the polemical, idiosyncratic and sometimes courageously lyrical text of *Apocalypse* (cited above), but each of these late works does mark a substantial advance in literary experimentation and exploration within the three major genres of his authorship – poetry, novel and essay. These and other concerns and motifs may be read profitably through Kierkegaardian lenses.

For Kierkegaard, full directness of religious address is not manifest before a long, spiralling chronological journey through the writings and it only truly - and *very* guardedly - begins in 1846 with the avowal of authorship, ‘A First and Last Explanation’, at the close of the pivotal *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*:

My role is the joint role of being the secretary and, quite ironically, the dialectically reduplicated author of the author or the authors. (CUP 627)

Seventy-one years later, in 1917, Eliot wrote words that lack signally the conscious irony of the earlier master, even as they address similar territory, but from a direction and in a strained, ‘unselfconscious’ and unsatisfactory dualistic language, that has been subsequently and justly much interrogated:

[...] the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material. (SW 54)

³² See Hough (1956:240-254). Hough’s memorable phrase is repeated by Worthen (1991:176). His book remains, overall, a still relevant critical study, but it should be supplemented with the thorough, targeted and much later research of Wright (2000), that also takes account of current schools of theory and of much fuller resources in Lawrence scholarship than were available 44 years ago.

Yet in that period of self-acknowledged transition (see 1928 'Preface', *SW* viii, x.) Eliot is also laying hold of an insight, grounded in Kierkegaard and much else before him, that we have met and considered in the opening concerns of this chapter. His last shot at it, in the essay cited above, has an insight worthy of SK, the real truth of which is undermined by the strong hint of superciliousness (not, surely, unintended) in the last sentence:

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things. (*SW* 58)

Kierkegaard and Eliot operate differently. For the reader of SK, there is much to be explained, unravelled and above all, *experienced* first, although the intention to be a religious writer is always present.³³ Whereas for Eliot this really does appear to come later, with signs of fideistic hunger accurately but only retrospectively detectable. The explicit strategy of *indirect* communication in Kierkegaard's authorship will indeed illuminate comparatively the other texts in this thesis. It will shed light on Eliot's work and his preoccupations (with salutary contrasts). From the later 1920's these did become explicitly Christian but with an emphasis that has not always been easy to respect. There is a profound implicit religious interest long before this, but only an already self-convinced reader could make that judgement of intention in his case, that is so right for Kierkegaard.³⁴ In 1933 he gave the Page-Barbour lectures at the University of Virginia, which were published in the following year, the year of the *Rock* Choruses, as the now much-maligned *After Strange Gods*.³⁵ But the poet moved onwards.

T.S. Eliot was also much tempted to propaganda in the Christian cause. He came to renounce his earlier directness of manner in *The Rock*, becoming increasingly disposed toward semi-allegorical forms of statement. This came about not only because of a deep concern with communication in the world of modern people "to whom the language of Christianity is not only dead but indecipherable," but also because of the theological and moral demands of an Incarnation which because it is a genuine incarnation runs the risk of creating a situation where there is "knowledge of words and ignorance of the Word." (Tinsley 1979: 3-4)

There are clear Kierkegaardian analogies here to be pursued.

Initially perhaps more surprising may be the illumination of Lawrence and the salutary meeting-points and contrasts in Kierkegaard. As early as September 1908, Lawrence had

³³ See Footnote 18 above.

³⁴ Jones (1964) is an ingenious example of this category from whose learned readings of Eliot I have learnt much but from whose systemic overview I dissent.

³⁵ I can recall my own first encounter with this work as a precociously 'literary' sixth former in 1962 and my puzzlement then at its presumptive assurance of tone about other writers that I was finding to be 'classical' in a quite different sense. This reaction remains over forty years later: the quality of Eliot's positive discernments is vitiated by a driven absence of empathy, and what reads now as a supercilious attempt to don the prophet's mantle.

written words the substance of which he could never disown throughout his life, in the second draft of a paper, 'Art and the Individual', the first edition of which was given at the Eastwood Debating Society in March of the same year:

It is art which opens to us the silences, the primordial silences which hold the secrets of things, the great purposes, which are themselves silent; there are no words to speak of them with, and no thoughts to think them in, so we struggle to touch them through art; and the eager unsatisfied world seeks to put them all into a religious phrase. Tolstoi defeated his own ends, then, when he demanded that art should be intelligible. It seems to be human fate to strive to know to the uttermost, and men in general cannot bear to touch the Mystery nakedly, without a garment of words. The deepest secrets of all are hidden in human experience, in human feeling, and the human heart is never satisfied till it can command the secret, dress the unutterable experience in the livery of an idea, and prison it with fetters of words. (*STH* 140-141)³⁶

As we noted, the critique in Kierkegaard's *Two Ages* climaxed in a prophetic sociology, and this was personally attested and experienced by its author in the *Corsair* affair. At this point, social and religious concerns synthesise for the final and basically post-pseudonymous phase of his authorship.³⁷ His diagnosis of the evacuation of meaning and practice in Christianity through its developed institutional role in culture, its *embourgeoisement* that suppresses the discernment of its experiential point and truth, is made fully explicit. He offers a holistic assessment, albeit with the 'unfair' partisanship of the (not supercilious) prophet, for whom the cost is not less than everything. In seeking to evaluate this with modern academic cross-disciplinary tools of enquiry a writer continually taunts the possibility of a devastating counter-subjective Kierkegaardian critique of his own efforts!

To summarise at this point: throughout Kierkegaard's authorship, there is an all-embracing religious concern, veiled (but conscious) at first, as, with due differentiation, with Eliot, but ultimately centre-stage in both instances. Kierkegaard is convinced that this has to be presented through *indirect communication* in modernity because what is to

³⁶ This is the period when the young Lawrence was striving to free himself in every way from the family and ethos of the Eastwood Congregational Chapel that had given him so much. For background to this, see Worthen (1991:168-178; 191).

³⁷ My phrase 'basically post-pseudonymous' requires justification. After *Postscript* what is generally termed SK's 'second authorship' begins. He first of all wished to present *Sickness Unto Death* (1849) under his own name, finally deciding against this. He even contemplated a new level of revealing realistic similitude but he finally drew back from 'transforming a fictitious character into actuality'. (*SUD* 135-40) In this work he introduces as author (he himself 'edits') Anti-Climacus, 'a Christian on an extraordinarily high level'. The height relates to the prefix 'Anti' in respect of rank: he comes *before* Johannes Climacus in this sense (and also Kierkegaard). [See *SUD* xii; *PC* xii-xiii; Walsh (1994: 240).] I agree with Connor's view (1985:184): "the Janus-faced Anti-Climacus ... not only closes the pseudonymous authorship but opens, ideally if not chronologically, Kierkegaard's 'second authorship' [...] Whereas previously he used the pseudonyms to set himself apart from ethical stages he had already passed through and left behind, here his use of pseudonyms is an admission of his shortcomings as a sinful human being." Hence the later explicit and religiously demanding 'literature is under his own name or the pseudonym closest to him (Anti-Climacus).' (Malantschuk 1971:176-7)

be conveyed effectively in his current (unpropitious) circumstances cannot otherwise be expressed.³⁸ The verbally over-familiar has lost its primary and essential significance, the retrieval of which requires a stringent process of defamiliarisation.

In *Postscript*, Kierkegaard wrote:

Because everyone knows the Christian truth, it has gradually become such a triviality that a primitive impression of it is acquired only with difficulty. When this is the case the art of being able to *communicate* eventually becomes the art of being able to *take away* or to trick something away from someone [...] when a man is very knowledgeable but his knowledge is meaningless or virtually meaningless to him, does sensible communication consist in giving him more to know, even if this is what he loudly proclaims that this is what he needs, or does it consist, instead, in taking something away from him? When a communicator takes a portion of the copious knowledge that the very knowledgeable man knows and communicates it to him in a form that makes it strange to him, the communicator is, as it were, taking away his knowledge, at least until the knower manages to assimilate the knowledge by overcoming the resistance to the form. (CUP 275-276)

Hence the reader who thinks that he understands Christianity has first to have the delusion unmasked by the defamiliarisation of a new form because:

... it is better to understand that something is so difficult that it cannot be understood than to understand that a difficulty is so easy to understand. (CUP 276)

5. Coda: Précis of Intellectual Background to the Divided and the Covert.

Kierkegaard in the first part of his authorship (and *Postscript* itself, very much a document of transition, is pseudonymous until the close) is thus a 'covert theologian'. I owe this phrase to the late Professor Gillian Rose, a writer already mentioned, as this was part of her own self-description, with passionate self-deprecating irony, as 'Jewish intellectual and covert theologian', in her inaugural lecture at Warwick University in February 1993. SK's is the main dialogical hermeneutic presence in the first half of Rose's dense but important work *The Broken Middle* (1992) and, arguably throughout the whole text. The major *maieutic* presence throughout Rose's authorship is however Hegel. See Caygill (1996), who emphasises that her project was to effect a synthesis of insights from both 'old, right wing' and 'young, left-wing' (post-) Hegelians.

This important background requires to be summarised. Theologically and politically the 'old' or right-wing Hegelians emphasized the compatibility between Hegel's philosophy and Christianity (which Hegel himself had sought to maintain) and they offered a

³⁸ Tinsley (1978:4-6) argues that this has always been the case in religious discourse and briefly discusses New Testament examples. This is not precisely Kierkegaard's historical concern and self-appointed task, of course, and it contrasts with the affirmation of the young Lawrence above.

politically conservative interpretation of his work. They developed Hegel's metaphysical Idealism which influenced 19th-century and early 20th-century British and American philosophy, notably that of Francis Herbert Bradley, who was the subject of the young T.S. Eliot's doctoral research, and an explicit mentoring and epistemic presence in *The Waste Land*. The 'young' or left-wing Hegelians, however, eventually moved to an atheistic position, many becoming political revolutionaries. This group included Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72),³⁹ Bruno Bauer (1809-92),⁴⁰ Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), and Karl Marx (1818-1883). Engels and Marx adapted Hegel's threefold historical dialectical movement to a materialistic, not idealistic model.⁴¹

A moment of biographical convergence occurred when, in October 1841, Kierkegaard finally broke off his engagement to Regine Olsen and sailed to Germany. In Berlin, together, unknowingly, with Engels,⁴² he attended lectures given before an international audience by the critical-Hegelian Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854) on 'the Philosophy of Revelation', which he did not enjoy.⁴³ A leading exponent of idealism and of the romantic tendency in German philosophy, Schelling, renowned one-time associate and indeed inspirer of Hegel, was now an opponent of the materialistic 'young' or left-wing school. He had taught in most of the leading universities in Germany and in 1841 was called from Munich to Berlin by Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, to offer an intellectual counterforce to the instruments of potential social disruption. It may even have been that Karl Marx attended these lectures too though we cannot be sure.

The paths of these two converge and split and, like Kierkegaard, Marx was awarded his higher degree in 1841. It is also noteworthy that as Kierkegaard's successful MA thesis, *The Concept of Irony* was composed on *Socrates* (midwife to the truth in antiquity), Marx in the same year received his Doctorate from the University of Jenna, for a thesis on

³⁹ The idea of God as a human projection is traceable in western thought to Feuerbach, whose humanistic intentions were avowedly anti-theistic and part of his importance is the impetus that he gave to the thought of Karl Marx, notably in alienation-theory. Feuerbach interpreted all Christian doctrines as 'secret ways of speaking about human potential in a natural environment.' (Migliore 1991:226) Interestingly the major Swiss theologian, Karl Barth (1886-1968), with his privileging of revelation 'from above', accepted Feuerbach's critique of religion, which he saw as a species of idolatry, especially in the 19th century theological forms that he inherited. Barth also opposed Hegel, though he continued (like Karl Marx) to use Hegelian terminology. From Kierkegaard he derived and developed a fundamental counter-idealist theological stance. In the Preface to the second edition of his commentary on *The Epistle to the Romans*, he famously remarked: "... if I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard calls 'the infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity.'" (Barth 1968:10) Later, when theological dogmatics (he disliked 'system') formed the heart of Barth's work, he had more questions about Kierkegaard. He also asserted that he was not hostile to philosophy unless it was a disguised form of natural theology. (Allen 1987:5)

⁴⁰ Bauer began his academic career as a biblical scholar, right-wing Hegelian and a close pupil of the master. He moved 'leftwards', was evicted from the Theology Department at Berlin in 1839 and subsequently also lost his Professorship at Bonn in 1843. Marx himself in 1845 publicly contested his later over-radical and unsupportable readings of Hegel. Finally, Bauer moved 'rightwards' again!

⁴¹ 'Marx's own engagement with Hegel was itself something of a dialectical process, from which emerged the nameless infant that was to become historical materialism.' (Wheen 1999:22)

⁴² CA vii.

⁴³ Lowrie (1970:144); CA vii, 229; Hannay (2001:162-3)

Democritus and *Epicurus* (materialists in antiquity),⁴⁴ having deliberately not presented it at Berlin, where he had been registered but where the reactionary Schelling would both scrutinise and almost certainly reject it. Marx's thesis was accepted at Jenna after a mere nine days but Kierkegaard was not awarded his degree from Copenhagen until five months after delivery of his thesis, a period that also required a seven and a half hour public academic disputation and defence, in Latin. It was a deeply stressful process. Both young men had completed their higher academic degrees three years after the deaths of their Lutheran fathers, the dominant parent in each life.⁴⁵ Each had staked out the trajectories of his own philosophy, branching out from Hegel, either to a dialectical existentialist, theologically grounded stance or to an anti-theological dialectical philosophy of action.

The central and notable religious point for Kierkegaard against Hegel is the idea that God is radically other than the human. It was precisely this that figures such as Feuerbach ('all theology is anthropology') and the Danish Hegelians had denied, and which Kierkegaard/Climacus insisted upon as being an indispensable part of Christian teaching. The first sense of 'absolute' is the absolute otherness of God. SK has been memorably described as Hegel's 'antipodal disciple' by Hendry (1982:14) and Hegel's and Kierkegaard's authorships have been viewed as diverse conflictual approaches to a convergent ground, a 'broken middle' or 'wound of negativity' (my link, see *CUP* 85), between 'law' and 'ethics' perceived as the political, ethical and sociological crux of our era. The characterisations in Kierkegaard's Aesthetic works embody life-stances that are presented pseudonymously from within, compelling the reader to his own stance of choice through his empathic engagement. It is a mistake frequently made to take a Kierkegaardian text of the early to middle period and identify its perceived argument as the author's own. These texts must be read, coded almost, within his own emergent schema first and only after this can a truly critical reading take place. Of course there is debate and disagreement about these boundaries - never trust the artist, trust the tale - but as a mode of reflection on Lawrence ('poet without a mask'⁴⁶) and Eliot ('invisible poet'⁴⁷), Kierkegaardian authorial strategies illuminate contrast and validity.

This leads to the problematic question of authenticity (=Authority) and how this can be discerned. In Kierkegaard this is read via the key category of the Apostolic, to be distinguished from the essentially Aesthetic category of the Genius. Such an authority is not recognised by power given or taken in the shifting social relations of humanity. It can only be apprehended (or proven) by the Apostle's 'own statement, and at the most his willingness to suffer anything for the sake of that statement.' The sources of his authority

⁴⁴ The title was *The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy*. Its opening triumphalist note of atheistic assertion of philosophical freedom and of the primacy of human self-consciousness is in the tradition of Feuerbach. (Wheen 1999:31-3)

⁴⁵ There the paternal resemblances end. Heinrich (formerly 'Herschel') Marx (1781-1838) was a secular Jew, assimilated to a nominal bourgeois Protestantism; Michael Pederson Kierkegaard (1756-1838), much influenced by pietistic Moravianism, also combined a deeply intelligent and religious nature with strong feelings of guilt, oppression and judgment. SK revered his parent whereas Karl Marx was relatively indifferent to his. Neither really spoke of their mothers.

⁴⁶ See Vivian de Sola Pinto: 'Introduction : D.H. Lawrence: Poet without a mask.' (*TCP* 1-21)

⁴⁷ See Hugh Kenner's (1965) early influential study: *The Invisible Poet: T.S. Eliot*.

are strictly hidden, purportedly divine, and his essential office cannot be affected by the opinions of others, even if they show contempt.⁴⁸

D.H. Lawrence, however ‘apostolic’,⁴⁹ rejected the institutional form, teaching and faith of the mainstream Christian church for reasons at least superficially different to those of Kierkegaard. T.S. Eliot, on the other hand, became committed to the institution and indeed *Four Quartets* has become a canonised Anglican devotional classic. The notion of ‘authority’ is usually communally sensed and conferred, within the constraining continuity of shared culture, tradition and law. That this has fragmented and/or expanded to multiplicity of vastness is a truism in western modernity. But ‘authority’ is also a quality that can be internalised and expressed prior to any current norms, as when we speak of a *self-authenticating* person. In our religious examination of these three writers this question of their authority (which each - even, covertly, the Danish ironist - laid claim to) has to be examined.

⁴⁸ *Of the Difference between a Genius and an Apostle*. (PA 123-4; EK pp. 339-49) Kierkegaard’s statement of the paradoxical nature of the apostolic human relation has its roots in St. Paul the prototypical apostle. Cf. 1 Corinthians 4.9-13; 2 Corinthians 4.7-12; 6.8-10 *passim*. For a later implicit vindication of Kierkegaard’s view from and within the province of modern New Testament scholarship, see Barrett: (1970: 110-111).

⁴⁹ For an application of the Kierkegaardian category to Lawrence, see ‘D.H. Lawrence’ in Auden (1956: 123).

CHAPTER THREE

The Method Demonstrated: T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'

To demonstrate the method of my argument I shall look at T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) as an exploration of the application of the Kierkegaardian concepts of Indirect Communication and Pseudonymity.

The Waste Land is a poem of voices whose context and meaning are incompletely realised, they are blurred and they elide into each other. The poem communicates at multiple levels and *between* the vocal presences that populate the poem, so that the term *communication* itself is, for the most part and in common sense terms, an exaggerated description. Rather, characters *miss* each other in a Dickensian fog. 'He Do the Police in Different Voices', the rejected title for the first two parts of the poem in draft is, as is well known, taken from Betty Higden's description of the vocal talents of the foundling, Sloppy, in chapter xvi of Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*. (WLF 125) Thirty-one years after the poem was published, in his lecture, 'The Three Voices of Poetry', Eliot referred tellingly to Dickens in an example of what the speaker (advisedly) claims was unwanted or *imposed* communication. At Mr. Pickwick's murder trial, the eavesdropping Mrs. Cluppins excuses herself in the witness-box by asserting that "the voices was very loud, sir, and forced themselves upon my ear." The deduction of jury and reader, guided by the insinuating Sergeant Buzfuzz, is that she was "... not listening, but [...] heard the voices." (OPP 91-2; 94) The formal development in Eliot's poetry is substantial but the thematic preoccupations remain constant. The writer of memory and desire is here recalling a formative presence.

An example of haplessly dysfunctional verbal gesturing is found in lines 111-138 of *The Waste Land* in which discrepant awareness is expressed through voices disengaged from each other.

Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
[...] I never know what you are thinking. Think.' (CPP 65)

In these lines the inconsequential has a desperation which modulates backwards and forwards from the shrill statement and question to the controlled, death-haunted response of 'Nothing again nothing' in alternating 'feminine' and 'masculine' voices which are unable affectively to connect. Lines 127-30 (CPP 65) emanate from a wild, 'flapper' voice, lacking the desperate hysteria and the dulled flatness of the previously characterised feminine and masculine. They are located as a seeming response to questions of life and thought and there is displacement of sense by placing the conjunction on its own as the start of a new sentence when, by sound alone, it could be a part of the preceding question, continuing as monologue through to line 130. This comes as a disconcertingly aesthetic displacement but it does not have a truly Kierkegaardian function. Eliot's nihilism here may be less of a pseudonymous mask than a real option and the mastery of the voices may be more desperate than comic, managed beyond, rather than on, the brink. As Robert Crawford observed, for the Eliot of this period:

... Shakespearean splendour, and indeed all art, is seen as springing from something beyond reason, and possibly senseless. (Crawford 1987: 110)

The characteristic 'masculine' tone in this passage is flat and sombre, the absence of quotation marks attributing an (authorial?) authority or groundedness, which is counterpointed by the stabbing, iterative 'female' tone. This is an effect achieved by echoing and carefully modulated patterns of repetition and the pointing-up of the frequently 'unclosed' speech. (Note the often unpaired placing of the inverted commas in the text. Lines 115-16, 118, 120, 124-5, 135-8 are the other 'masculine' references without quotation marks. Lines 111, 112, 113 each begin with a quotation mark but are left open, hanging, at the end. The three-fold repetition of *thinking* through line 112 to 113 is brought up short by the opening and closing quotation marks which encapsulate line 114, ending with the dull thud of the defeated (or imperative?) *Think*, itself punctuated as a one-word sentence.¹ This is paired with the three-fold repetition of *nothing* in lines 122-3, following the lifelessly testy masculine 'put-down' of line 120 (itself a repetition). Line 123 concludes this reiterative sequence with an enjambment that is both reinforced and displaced by the prefixing capital letter and the enclosing quotation marks, which embrace a question mark. This leaves the emphatic one-word concluding question starkly alone and hovering on the verge of statement, viz. *Is this all there is? Nothing?* In the annotated draft of this passage (*WLF* 11), the shape of which was not altered by Eliot in the final version, Ezra Pound commented '*photography?*', which Valerie Eliot glosses as 'Implying [...] too realistic a reproduction of an actual conversation.' (*WLF* 126) Vivien Eliot's pencilled '*WONDERFUL*' seems to me to be the more accurate critique here. Pound's, in this instance at least, is not the observation of a 'greater craftsman'.

Named or nameless historical and contemporary voices populate *The Waste Land* and pass through the sequences of this text, without affect. They:

... do not speak to each other, or really to us. They are more like voices in a Dantesque, infernal space, where they cry out, relive their unforgettable moments, and see strange hallucinations. (Hughes 1992: 13-14)²

Writing in 1953, as playwright and poet, Eliot discussed the composition of dramatic verse-dialogue between characters that are:

... in some sort of conflict, misunderstanding or attempt to understand each other. [...] I have penetrated into this maze so far only to indicate the difficulties, the

¹ Imperative is likely: compare with the five-fold repetition "Think", progressing from 'now' to 'at last' in paragraphs four and five of 'Gerontion'. (*CPP* 38)

² Ted Hughes' own shamanistic, anthropological interests, combined with his practitioner's approach, provide readings of *The Waste Land* that are fruitful out of all proportion to their brevity. Compare his insights here with Maude Ellmann: '... *The Waste Land* aspires to the condition of ritual. This fascination with cathartic rites drew Eliot towards the theatre in his later work, but his poems also crave performance, incantation.' Ellmann (1987: 110, Note 5)

limitations, the fascination, for a poet who is *used to writing poetry in his own person*, of the problem of making imaginary personages talk poetry.

In *The Waste Land*, too, historical and imaginary ‘personages talk poetry’, so where is the poet’s *own person* in the earlier text? Will the real T.S. Eliot please stand up? In his ensuing discussion of Browning’s Dramatic Monologues, thirty-one years later, Eliot enunciated a principle that, whilst arguable about Browning, is interesting for the understanding of his own work:

What we normally hear, in fact, in the dramatic monologue is the voice of the poet, who has put on the costume and make-up either of some historical character, or one out of fiction. His personage must be identified to us - as an individual, or at least as a type, before he begins to speak. [...] dramatic monologue cannot create a character. For character is created and made real only in an action, a communication between imaginary people.

(Extracts from ‘The Three Voices of Poetry’, italics mine. [OPP 91-2; 94; 95])

The Waste Land, then, is an interleaved set of dramatic monologues in which an intentionally non-dramatist, but still *dramatic*, author has orchestrated and created indeterminate voices of the dead and partly living. They speak through him as a ventriloquist’s dummy and, thus, by his own admission, contribute to or represent the poet’s own voice - or as much of it as may be heard at this stage. This disconcertingly perceptive figure of the poet is well made by Maude Ellmann (Ellmann 1987: 112, Note 32), who takes issue with the more traditional reading of Helen Gardner (Gardner 1973: 78) that in *The Waste Land* “the poet [...] is behind all the voices of men and women that we are to be asked to listen to.” I believe that Ellmann is nearer the truth: the disquietudes and estrangements of the poem are deeper than this and the voices are not so easily ordered and clarified. Kierkegaard, whose own authorship was much concerned with these matters, wrote:

Ventriloquism consists in speaking in such a way that it cannot be determined who the speaker is; the words are heard all right, but as if they were not localised, as if no one were speaking them. (LY 289)

The localising of *The Waste Land* is always allusive, a matter of hints, guesses and only arguably helpful footnotes.³ The centrifugal technique of this poem, of course, is *more* than the vocal medium of a dummy and I suggest that the function of a *transmitter*,

³ There has been much debate about the authorial intention behind Eliot’s notes to *The Waste Land*, of course. Were they space-fillers, self-confessed “bogus scholarship”, or intended to be integral to the poem’s interpretation? See ‘The Frontiers of Criticism’, (OPP 109), and Rainey (1991: 117; 132, Note 61) for the evidence for the main lines of debate here. There is still much to be said for Hugh Kenner’s robust comment in 1959 that ‘...we shall do well to discard the notes as much as possible; they have bedevilled discussion for decades.’ (Kenner 1965: 129) Some parallels and contrasts with Kierkegaard’s more explicit and constant controllingly evasive approach to his authorship will be noted below. Note too the wonderfully placed quotation of Eliot concerning *The Waste Land* from Professor Theodore Spencer ‘...it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling.’ (WLF 1)

unwitting at times, more accurately catches Eliot's relation to his voices at this stage of his writing and that Ellmann's emphasis does need to be amplified by other criteria. We must remember that Eliot was a poet of considerable 'negative capability', whose resources of poetic-critical empathy were remarkable.⁴ He had something of the quality of a literary chameleon, susceptible always to the danger of unwanted or unwitting invasion by the voice of another.⁵ For this reason among others, the authoritative discernment and maieutic role of Ezra Pound were strangely necessary for the final production of the poem.⁶ There was a managerial problem: one (almost) of self-control.

Kierkegaard is both like and unlike. As a dangerously precocious intellectual and imaginative writer, pressing a counterclaim against the academy and orthodoxy of his day, the young Kierkegaard, like the young Eliot, sought to fashion a new stylistic and authorial strategy. Unlike Eliot he worked alone without any Pound (or, later, John Hayward) equivalent. In his confidence, his prodigality and intensity of output, Kierkegaard is quite different, more like Lawrence than Eliot, neither seeking nor getting much audience-approval.⁷ He was 'a kind of poet', not (really) a novelist and certainly not a playwright. He distinctively exploited an extraordinary range of tale and dialogue in the forging of his own pseudonymous authorship and, also like the Eliot of *The Waste Land*, what he most wanted to say could not be fully said:

I am a poet, but a very special kind, for I am by nature dialectical, and as a rule dialectic is precisely what is alien to the poet. (*POV* 162)

The conflict between these gifts and his ethical-religious formation and choice was a creative and, for Kierkegaard, deeply painful affair of inner division and *annihilation* (his own term). (*POV* 84-5) At times he wanted to *free* himself from the encumbrance of his gifts or *empty* himself of them so as to lead a straightforwardly religious life, perhaps as a country pastor. Mackey (1971) examines this inner conflict.

Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings serve a complex purpose. The pseudonyms who instigate, frequent, and, indeed, obfuscate the multiple coherent argumentation of his

⁴ The case for an unsuspected influence is persuasively made in Lobb: 1981: 63-8) and justifies the strength of his conclusion (1981: 75): "Keats' letters - clearly the most important Romantic influence on Eliot's thought." See, for example, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' where Eliot, writing about poetic composition, refers to 'a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation [...] a passive attending upon the event.' (*SE* 21)

⁵ For a fine and balanced summary of this characteristic of Eliot, see Kearns (1987: 177). The chameleon-quality in Eliot was puzzlingly perceived from very early days. John Middleton Murray, by no means a percipient critic of the poetry of his time, reviewed *Ara Vos Prec* in *The Athenaeum*, 20th February, 1920, and wrote that the author was a "chameleon who changes colour infinitely, and every change is protective." [Cited in Stead (1967: 116)]

⁶ But note C.K. Stead's comment (Stead 1967: 170): '... we are dealing with poetry different in kind from most other poetry in English: few poems would survive cutting of the kind applied to *The Waste Land* ...' Indeed not: Kierkegaard and Lawrence did their own work and each fiercely defended it. Eliot's still extraordinary poem resists any simple classification.

⁷ Of *Either/Or*, for example, Kierkegaard wrote: '...I wished to have no reviews because I did not dare to hope for any substantial review.' (*POV* 85)

texts generate each other across boundaries of hazarded understanding.⁸ The voices *are* localised; they are always placed in a setting. They transcend mere caricature and they have a more-than-vocal life, but this is not achieved through physical description because there is none, in contrast to the selectively fragmented physical descriptions of *Waste Land* characters, where Eliot's technique so serves to enhance the effect achieved substantially through the voice.⁹ The conveyed message of Eliot's personae is their estrangement, their inability to communicate or to relate. In general too, Eliot's voices are not usually didactic in this poem.¹⁰ Kierkegaard's pseudonymous voices do not truly communicate with each other either but he writes from 'top-down' (or outside them) with some conscious application behind this, whereas Eliot, despite his strong nod to Bradleyan solipsism, is *within* his inferno as dummy or transmitter. Kierkegaard, in a later retrospect, distanced himself from his aesthetic pseudonymous authorship. The voices within his earlier writings speak out of possibility, not reality, because the aesthetic life is endlessly disengaged speculation. They are deceivers, themselves unconsciously deceived, and presented as such, and yet the truth they live is *their* truth, to be apprehended as such - and to be found wanting.

Do not be deceived by the word *deception*. One can deceive a person out of what is true, and - to recall old Socrates - one can deceive a person into what is true. Yes, in only this way can a deluded person actually be brought into what is true - by deceiving him. (*POV*. 53)

But, concerning SK's pseudonyms, it is truly 'as if *no one* were speaking them.' Italics mine. (*LY* 289)

In *Repetition*, for example, Constantin understands neither his own situation, which he therefore cannot remedy, nor that of the Young Man, whom he therefore cannot assist. He is, quite unconsciously, trapped in the aesthetic sphere. Although the text is in the first person, Kierkegaard discloses the discrepant awareness through irony and symbol. Let me illustrate by a passage from this work where Constantin Constantius,¹¹ returning to Berlin on his own fruitless quest to achieve the 'movement' of renewal through revisitation, to re-live a happy time, discovers that it is Ash Wednesday, that "fate had strangely contrived it' to be *allgemeine Busz- und Betttag* [Universal Day of Penance and Prayer]":

⁸ From text to text this is what actually happens in Kierkegaard: the pseudonyms *breed* each other in the dialectical process and with astonishing quantitative fecundity. A similar (but non-dialectical) process happens in Eliot but it is miniaturist by comparison. As writers they contrast in volubility!

⁹ This point is well highlighted by Carol Christ (Christ 1991: 36): 'Eliot achieves a more successfully articulated voice, even in the context of his concern with its inadequacy, by scattering the body, by repressing and dislocating the visual.'

¹⁰ I would make an exception for the 'Typist and Clerk' episode in "The Fire Sermon" of *The Waste Land* (*CPP* 68-9), with its eighteenth century nuances of the verse of Johnson and Goldsmith and an oddly trivializing jauntiness in quatrain rather than couplet rhyme scheme that is mockingly anti-heroic. There are layers of reference in this text and ll. 231-4, 241-2, for example, obtrude a strong moralistic presence, through the supposedly neutralising and plangent Tiresias. See further discussion of this passage below.

¹¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 9 ff. of this study.

To be sure, they did not throw ashes into one another's eyes with the words: *Memento o homo! Quod cinis es et in cinerem revertaris*. But all the same, the whole city lay in one cloud of dust. At first I thought that it was a government measure, but later I was convinced that the wind was responsible for this nuisance and without respect of persons followed its whim or its bad habit, for in Berlin at least every other day is Ash Wednesday. But this is of little concern to my project. This discovery had no connection with 'repetition', for the last time I was in Berlin I had not noticed this phenomenon, presumably because it was winter.
(R 152-3)

The only valid Kierkegaardian attempt at repetition involves a stepping-out beyond the known. The Young Man in the text finally seems to achieve the 'movement' by the breaking-down of his courtship and his poetic self-realisation as a romanticised persona of the Biblical Job. There is a near-hysterical humour in the tone of its presentation, it may be said. But the Young Man, at first gull and stooge, achieves, in practice, some quasi-romantic release from a re-iterative (cyclic) sphere or stage, leaving Constantin, would-be mentor and now, in a reversal of which he is unaware, stooge. Constantin can only continue to muse, scheme, and question: and remain, firmly, in the aesthetic sphere, misunderstanding the true nature of repetition and endeavouring to control it.¹² Hence the comic irony of the presence of the ash and dust, caused either by civic dictate or natural whimsy, with a telling biblical ring. The city of his memories is, actually, shrouded with the emblems of daily dirt and human mortality, and this on his journey of hope to Berlin! Ash Wednesday and its actually absurd attendant phenomena, irrelevantly echoed by Constantin's citation of the liturgy,¹³ is viewed as an every-other-day phenomenon with "no connection with 'repetition'" by the narrator. He had the experience but missed the meaning because only "the wind was responsible". (R 152-3)

But this action of the wind is not to be dismissed. This is because the etymological association of *wind* or *breath* with *spirit* occurs in biblical and other languages. (There are Ancient Greek sources, for example, in Aeschylus and Aristotle, who both use the same word for each meaning.¹⁴) As a student of theology, Kierkegaard would know that the Septuagint and New Testament Greek *pneuma* renders the Hebrew Old Testament *rûah*, meaning *wind*.¹⁵ Hence Constantin's "the wind was responsible for this nuisance

¹² "When stoicism has stepped aside, only the religious movement remains as the true expression for repetition and with the passionate eloquence of concerned freedom proclaims its presence in the conflict." This comes (R 302.) from a corrective explanatory note elicited from Kierkegaard by a favourable review from the Hegelian, Professor J.L. Heiberg, who nonetheless misunderstood the categories in which Kierkegaard was seeking to work. These words are ascribed to Constantin Constantius, but they differ significantly in style and tone from the avuncular worldliness of the pseudonymous narrator of *Repetition*.

¹³ The text gives the old Roman Catholic (not nineteenth-century Lutheran) Latin liturgy, spoken as the priest presses ash on the penitent's forehead.

¹⁴ See Arnt and Gingrich (1957: 680), art. πνεῦμα.

¹⁵ "[...] the basic meaning of *rûah* therefore, is more or less *blowing*." E. Kamlah, Art. 'Spirit, Holy Spirit' in Brown (1978: 690). Thus the opening of the biblical creation-narrative, in Genesis 1.2 b, is rendered in the 17th century *King James (Authorised) Version*: "And the *Spirit* of God moved upon the face

[...] followed its whim or bad habit” has more than one layer of authorial and textual irony. He is missing the true route to repetition which is actually (unwittingly) being shown to him and which is due to more than “fate’s strange contriving”. Another submerged text here is the New Testament, John 3.6-8, which refers to the apparent whimsicality of the wind as the ways of the spirit (and where the Greek root *pneuma* is used for both *wind* and *spirit*¹⁶).

Non-communication between subjects has a perceptual base in Kierkegaard’s thinking which is described by Johannes Climacus (who has a pivotal relation to the Kierkegaardian authorship) as follows:

I can grasp the other person’s actuality only by thinking it, consequently by translating it into possibility, where the possibility of deception is just as thinkable. - For existing ethically, it is an advantageous preliminary study to learn that the individual human being stands alone. (*CUP* 323)

This chastened awareness is not found within the aesthetic sphere and it is not present for *The Waste Land* presences either “who do not speak to each other, or really to us”¹⁷ and who in some sense belong there too, whilst actualising variant forms of despair.¹⁸ Constantin perceives no fear in the many handfuls of dust that greet him in Berlin but the comic in *Repetition* allows, as comedy does, a hopeful counter-text albeit unreadable to the protagonist. For the Kierkegaardian aesthete, constrained within the horizons of subjectivity, other presences are only glimpsed as possibilities, ultimately opaque, unadopted projects, veiled in illusion. “The Seducer’s Diary” which concludes *Either/Or I* furnishes the best example of Kierkegaard’s literary actualisation of what is conceptualised above.

The plot is an account of heartless cunning and exploitation of friendship and desire, expressed in the characteristic military imagery of romance *genre* but made chilling by the aesthetic detachment of the protagonist who *spectates* his enactment in and as the process of his own self-creation. However the text operates from a variegated authorial perspective, which invites a more complex reader-engagement than such summary, may

of the waters.” Most later English translations follow this sense but the *NRSV* gives a preferred reading of the same verse as “a *wind* from God swept over the face of the waters.”

¹⁶ Interestingly, Kierkegaard wrote intertextually from the same passage a year earlier in the ‘Preface’ to *Either/Or Part I* where his topic is doubt of the transparency implied in the notion of the equivalence of outer and inner. The pseudonymous editor, Victor Eremita, writes about the reader’s experience of suspected concealed and unrevealable secrets: “... like a fleeting shape, it has drifted through your mind now and then. A doubt such as this comes and goes, and no one knows whence it comes or whither it goes.” (*EO I* 3)

¹⁷ Hughes: See note 2 above.

¹⁸ In an unusual study of Eliot’s religious symbolism, the medievalist Clifford Davidson summarises an earlier critical tendency to see an implicit longing for the waters of baptism in the imagery of dryness, drought and mirage that permeate the poem at many levels. (Davidson 1999: 18-23) This is a reading of *The Waste Land* which I find persuasive but, whilst the case for Eliot’s profound, life-long and deeply informed religious interest and hunger no longer needs making, his work cannot be schematised in ways analogous to the progress of Kierkegaard’s authorship. The starting-points and intentions are different.

suggest. We have the perspectives of the diary-editor *A* (and the characteristic comic/authentic description of his finding of the manuscript which was not left to be found; the Kierkegaardian Johannes seeks no-one's approval). *A* gives us both a setting and outside view of Johannes and a critical *placing* of his temperamentally defined, poeticising diary. (*EOI* 305-6) He also assists our understanding of the girl Cordelia, through her returned and unopened letters to Johannes which he publishes, as well as a letter to himself, (*EOI* 309-10) all of which show her devotion, character and intelligence, and her inability to understand or keep pace with Johannes. She has entrusted some of her letters from Johannes to *A* and these, appropriately inserted in the text, qualify the impressions of cool strategy conveyed by the Seducer's first-person account, intensifying awareness of his aesthetic-poetic gift and personal allure.¹⁹ Through this editor-strategy²⁰ Kierkegaard provides a variety of first-person accounts that furnish a kind of interaction between the subjectivities and with the reader. Although the characters are existentially isolated from and strange to each other as Edith Kern has well noted: "... each character is thus an author - as well as a hero or heroine - revealed in either Preface, letters, or diary." (Kern 1970: 37)

The main body of this text is, of course, Johannes' diary-entries, within which we glimpse a brilliant strategist, gifted with a poetic capacity to apprehend and arrest the moment, a warm and charming lover in direct address and a psychologist who, at the last, stands mystified before the impenetrable boundary of the Other. Never is this more poignantly presented than in the depiction of the pair dancing, where Johannes realises his own opacity to Cordelia and that he is "merely the occasion for her moving." It reads as a classic anthology-piece of nineteenth-century European Romanticism, the aesthetic savouring compounded by pathos:

I am experiencing with her the emergence of her love. I myself am almost invisibly present when I am sitting visible at her side. My relationship to her is like a dance that is supposed to be danced by two people but is danced by only one. That is, I am the other dancer, but invisible. She moves as in a dream, and yet she is dancing with another, and I am that other one who, insofar as I am visibly present, is invisible, and insofar as I am invisible, is visible. The movements require another. She bows to him; she stretches out her hand to him. She recedes; she approaches again. I take her hand; I complete her thought, which nevertheless is completed within itself. She moves to the melody in her own soul; I am merely the occasion for her moving. (*EOI* 380)

'This image of the dance for two danced only by one,' writes Edith Kern, 'this inability of Kierkegaard's fictional world to contain valid human interrelationships stresses again the fundamental aesthetic dilemma that confronted him ...' (Kern 1970: 37)

¹⁹ Cf. *EOI* 402-9: a particularly apt sequence of contrasting impressions: calculation, duplicity, charm, and comic bathos.

²⁰ It is more complex than we have outlined here of course. Victor Eremita is editor overall and *A* edits the aesthetic *E/OI* and *B* the ethical *E/O2*. Eremita's 'chance' discovery of the manuscripts is hilariously conveyed adding to the ironic diversity and distancing of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous fictive world and emphasising his dialectically-imaginative truth-claims through the power of narrative.

It is not dissimilar in *kind* to the realm of discourse of *The Waste Land* but in *degree* there is a tighter desperation in Eliot's poem, the mockery is dark, the macabre more present, the possibility of optimism, let alone redemption, is beyond the province of the text. The humour presupposes only judgement. The Typist and Clerk episode from 'The Fire Sermon' could, in theory, furnish an apt comparison with 'The Diary'. In effect we find extreme contrast. Compare Tiresias with *A* and his passivity of presence contrasts with the strongly directive function that we noted above. Compare the typist with Cordelia and the satirical, wispy descriptions of her life-style are socially/culturally from a different cosmos. Cordelia's reflective and humane laments to *A* of her love for Johannes are far more than "one half-formed thought" allowed by her brain: she is no fragmented soul-puppet. Johannes plans a military campaign, the clerk enacts a mugging. Eliot's famous passage appears to operate as a monotone alongside the authorial criteria that Kierkegaard establishes: but this is too prescriptive. There is shape, ironic pattern and aesthetic grace in 'the Diary', but the textual ironies in the Eliot passage come through the counterpointing of heroic imitation and less-than-mock-heroic event with the three-fold tonal interplay between Johnsonian ethical robustness, Goldsmithian whimsical sentiment and implicit Baudelarian horror at lust without affect. This is the human *animal*, pre-conscious aesthete; Johannes represents a Wildean peak of the process, but without (and this is most telling) a *trace* of actually erotic physicality. Johannes is a ghostly presence, spirit even, whereas the Clerk is closer to a Swiftian Yahoo.²¹ Both authors communicate through indirection and incommunicability is their common theme. We look further.

By his own admission Kierkegaard wrote as a "single individual" for "single individuals". This was his primary dialectical category for authorship, for wisdom and for religion and he used the phrase in two senses. In the pseudonymous (aesthetic) literature, it denotes the 'outstanding' or notable individual, one differentiated through culture or intelligence. In the directly-authored 'upbuilding' or 'edifying' (religious) works, the reference is to the realisable goal or good end of all humanity: it is a *universal* term. The expression and its function are used *dialectically* by Kierkegaard in what he calls a 'double stroke', in that the two-fold meanings deliberately incite both envious emulation and revulsion in the readership.²²

Truth of value is always the experienced truth of the individual, passionately held and *pathos-filled*.²³ That which has an only an objective status (mathematical truth or, still more, philosophical metaphysical system) is only of secondary value until engagement takes place. The truth that matters is *subjectivity*: it is 'passionately apprehended by the

²¹ *A* writes of Johannes: 'In the same sense as it could be said that his journey through life was undetectable (for his feet were formed in such a way that he retained the footprint under them - this is how I best picture to myself his infinite reflectedness into himself), in the same sense no victim fell before him.' (EOI 307) For the completely contrasted and Swiftian delineation of the Clerk, see especially the deleted ll. 179-80 in *WLF* 47, about which Pound aptly commented "probably over the mark". About Swift, Eliot wrote: '... his poetry, as well as his prose, attested that he hated the very smell of the human animal.' (SE 190)

²² *POI* 115, together with pp. 1-2 of this thesis, with footnotes. The term *hiin enkelte* is thus translated by the Hongos who clearly do not share Ronald Gregor Smith's earlier preference.

²³ Kierkegaard's own phrase for true knowing. See, e.g., *POV* 218.

subject.’²⁴ We may say that it is ‘indwelt’. Such a viewpoint, the basis of his supposed opposition to Hegelianism, must be argued in more diverse forms than the systemic treatise and Kierkegaard’s literary-stylistic versatility is a fortuitously matching necessity for what he seeks to do. He writes as a quasi-philosopher of literary genius with a theological intent.

... my whole authorship pertains to Christianity, to the issue: becoming a Christian, with direct and indirect polemical aim at that enormous illusion, Christendom, or the illusion that in such a country all are Christians of sorts. (*POV* 23)²⁵

This heady combination of talent and goal accounts for some of the diversity of readings of his work, which also arise from differing interests of approach. My concern here is with the literary and theological, the second only through the first - which was Kierkegaard’s own method:

The movement the authorship describes is: *from* ‘the poet’, from the esthetic - *from* ‘the philosopher,’ from the speculative - *to* the indication of the most inward qualification of the essentially Christian. (*POV* 5)

He developed the traditional forms handed down to him and renewed them (constantly) throughout his authorship. A further example of this is *Fear and Trembling*²⁶, which has been (rightly) read as a searching exploration of the religious concept of faith. But it does this from within, with fictive power and through a highly complex text, by turns tonally objective, dialectical, ironic and passionate.

A mere glance at structure will illustrate. There is a pseudonymous Preface in the first person by Johannes de Silentio, followed by a section variously titled in English *Exordium*,²⁷ or, better, *Attunement*,²⁸ from the Swedish term *Stemning*. We are swept

²⁴ I owe this helpful phrase to Andrew Louth from his chapter ‘The Legacy of the Enlightenment’ in Louth (1983: 27).

²⁵ This was his own assessment, questioned by some critics on two counts: that the stance was only reached retrospectively at a late stage of the authorship or that Kierkegaard’s strategies of pseudonymity and ironic indirection make such simplistic deduction problematic. Broadly, the first was well-represented by Roger Poole (Poole: 1993). Kierkegaard himself recognised that his works were not a consciously-conceived detailed project from the first, he learnt as he wrote and, retrospectively, he attributed their (remarkable) unity of function to *Governance* (Providence or God), see *POV* 76-7. Louis Mackey (1971) presented the view of a steady process of ironic undermining throughout the major texts, e.g. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. With respect to each of these, I take Kierkegaard’s *own* view as normative. (With, amongst more recent commentators, Evans (1989: 11, 99).

²⁶ See also preliminary comments on this text in chapter 1 of this thesis.

²⁷ This is the Hongs’ scholastically formal translation. In their notes they indicate this choice of word from Kierkegaard’s final draft, glossing *proem* from the Greek. See *FT* 245.

²⁸ Alastair Hannay in his edition, *FT* 2 13, translates thus because “we are ‘tuned’ to the right frame of mind” in the opening section of the text proper which is lyric rather than dialectic. (He follows Walter Lowrie’s earlier rendition of *Prelude*, which also seeks the musical analogy (see *FT* 3). There is a fine balance between these choices, which serves to illustrate the versatility of Kierkegaard’s text, but *Attunement* is my preferred term.

into the poetic orchestration of the work. The section begins in fairy-tale mode ('Once upon a time') with a man's 'fractured' remembrance of childhood's simple impressionable hearing of the Abraham/Isaac narrative. The man lacks philosophy and exegetical skills,²⁹ but he has developed over time a passionate desire to grasp the existential mystery of the faith that compelled Abraham. "... what occupied him was not the beautiful tapestry of imagination but the shudder of the idea."³⁰ And this "shudder of the idea", through the authorial medium of the aesthetic pseudonym, Johannes de Silentio, is what Kierkegaard effectively conveys, and, with affect, making use of "the beautiful tapestry of imagination" to do it. Note how what the man did *not* long for is so described as to sustain a fabulous tone, which is also romantically pious:

His craving was *not* to see the beautiful regions of the East [...] the earthly glory of the promised land [...] that god-fearing couple whose old-age God had blessed
...³¹

The Attunement/Exordium follows this with four *Problemata*³² in each of which Abraham's preparation for his sacrifice is imaginatively and differently recreated, but without faith in each case. At the close of each there is an accompanying parable-account of mother-child weaning which accentuates the severance of natural bond and the remembrance of the maternal tenderness of the breast by contrast with the paternal murderous act of the major text. These short passages have a choric function in their contrasting of nurture-strategies in a folk world, as shown by the repetitive phrasing of the first and last sentence in each case: 'When the child is to be weaned the mother [...] How fortunate the one who ...' (FT 11-14) They accentuate, still more, the mythic distancing of the contents of the text.

Eliot's intertextual echoing throughout his poem elicits a complexity of response. But whereas Kierkegaard's dialectical lyric invites us into a world of passional knowing (*by one who does not understand*) of what questions absolutes (infanticide) and what lies hidden from view (faith), Eliot induces a world of dry souls in drought. Bats, corpses, sailors, barmaids, flappers, mythic androgens, glass-fronted hyacinth girls, and seedy merchants dominate a text whose pathos-filled moments come in poignant contrast:

Datta: what have we given?
My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed (CPP 74)

²⁹ 'He did not know Hebrew; if he had known Hebrew, he would perhaps have understood the story and Abraham.' (FT 9) This is classic Kierkegaardian irony, resting not on the disparagement of leaning but of its foolishly assumed necessary connection with *pathos-filled* knowledge.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ *ibid.* Italics mine.

³² Kierkegaard's own description. (FT 249)

The thunder presaging rain brings dignity suggesting (from beyond, not within) a summons to a different existence-standard. There is fear and trembling here a-plenty and the suggestion of an irreversible and near-fatal sexual friendship as a defining-moment that shrinks the subject, even if, as ensuing lines suggest, it is secret after death. The physical imagery is un-Kierkegaardian but the 'movement' of the Leap within, and not out of, a sphere suggests an eternal recurrence with voices outside, unredeemed by gentle humour.

That things are not what they seem (and what we may require them to be) is the suppressed disquiet which underlies both aesthetic and ethical spheres of life and the disclosure of false-seeming is a major theme of comedy. The strings, of course, may be tightened to sound a shriller, discordant note. Comedy is scarcely the dominant genre of *The Waste Land* and the Danish ironist did not inhabit the *Inferno*.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Midwife Does Not Give Birth – Eliot and Kierkegaard: Revelation and Disclosure

1. Kierkegaardian Themes: How we know what we know.

In his *Philosophical Fragments* (1844) Kierkegaard is concerned to define and expose two incompatible ways of appropriating truth, a model of innateness accessible through recollection and reason and a model of response to a revelation from outside or beyond the subject. The work is a remarkably dense stylistic philosophical/literary achievement. As early as his university Master's thesis *The Concept of Irony* (1841) he had focused on the disparities in the relationship of Socrates to Christ, and in *Fragments* he seeks to demonstrate their defining contrasting roles both as pedagogues and something more than this. The issue for Kierkegaard is that Socrates is the catalyst of the learning, our learning, of such truth as we may find within ourselves, but that Christ brings to us, as from outside us, that truth that we do not and cannot have. Socrates has indeed the role of *midwife* but midwives, as such, cannot give birth. 'The *teacher* [my italics] ... is the god, who gives the condition and gives the truth.' (PF 14) Without this revelatory approach, duly responded to, the learner is in 'untruth', called by Kierkegaard, after careful exposition of the epistemic condition, *sin*.

We should note here a central and distinctive 'language game' of *Philosophical Fragments* in which Kierkegaard develops a bare abstract dialectical argument and, with increasing but unacknowledged obviousness, introduces classical Christian language and idiom as a parallel that more and more heavily underlines and clarifies intent and distinction. The term *sin* is thus introduced as descriptor of the state of being 'untruth and to be that through one's own fault.' (PF 15) There is pointed astringency in this definition here and the discussion goes on to introduce related familial terms, as the restorative response and process of the subject are outlined. Examples are: *new person, conversion, repentance, rebirth*. (PF 18-19) With his characteristic recourse to strategies of dialectical undercutting, Kierkegaard, as the process becomes more and more marked, has a hypothetical interlocutor who interjects an indignant charge that this is 'the shabbiest plagiarism ever to appear'. (PF 35) In fact the true authorial intention is to demonstrate through a contextual ploy of defamiliarisation that the overly familiar should, both ironically and in meaningful earnest, become *strange*.

Through the maieutic Socratic encounter the subject can seemingly give birth to himself, owing no one anything, certainly not love. But this is, in effect, a *docetic* birth:

He had the condition therefore within himself, and the bringing forth, the birth is only an appearing of what was present and that is why here again in this birth the moment is instantly followed by recollection. It is clear that the person who is born by dying away more and more can less and less be said to be born ... (PF 31)

But the truly reborn one, affectively relational and continuous with, but moving on from, a former self, owes all to the 'divine teacher'. The dialectal bareness of this

account, cross-referred and pointed up by New Testament idiom, is also given a further dimension of warmth and ‘pathos’ (Kierkegaard’s term) by the obvious theological intent of the parable of ‘the king who loved a maiden of lowly station in life.’ (PF 26-30) This narrative is called by Paul Müller, ‘The God’s Poem – the God’s History’ – the paired terms, the first is Kierkegaard’s, are not accidental.¹ The parable represents a perspective and narrative shift from the ‘bottom-up’, essentially Socratic, process, which begins with the isolated subject, to a revelatory ‘top-down’ one, from the point of view of the attitude and approach of ‘the god’, necessarily here, for Kierkegaard/Climacus, an Indirect Communication. It is “an aesthetic rewriting of this unrepresentable ‘rebirth’”. (Rose 1992: 39)

Within the wider authorship this tale has a characteristic Kierkegaardian theme of ‘unhappy love’ but, as within the whole aesthetic *oeuvre*, no reductive biographical referent is ever adequate. On the contrary here it is stringently subsumed to the overriding intent, as ‘poetical venture’, a literary counterpoint of perspective and tonal warmth to en-flesh, to add depth to and take further what is already being conveyed. In the tale, the king has the problem of how to win the beloved commoner-maiden without recourse to strategies involving either deception, by making her what she is not, or overwhelming, by diminishing her through what he is. Only as equals can love be both offered and returned so the king resolves to appear as an incognito. Climacus glosses carefully and wittily the limits of the religious analogy in the ‘appearing’. There is no irony – no doubly concealed meaning - in that to which the parable incompletely points. It is what allows and effects transition from the subject’s epistemological enclave, here affectively nuanced by contrast with the dominant tone, and this is made wittily and pointedly clear:

.... this form of a servant is not something put on like the king’s plebeian cloak, which just by flapping open would betray the king; it is not something put on like the light Socratic summer cloak, which although woven from nothing is concealing and revealing – but it is his true form. (PF 31-2)

Behind this text lies the language and teaching Paul’s New Testament letter to the Philippians 2.5-11, itself a poeticised hymnic passage, and in the anti-docetic emphasis (I use this term again quite deliberately: see *true form*) Climacus/Kierkegaard is in keeping with orthodox Christological tradition. Karl Barth, as we have noted, acknowledged Kierkegaard as an early mentor and he commented thus on this biblical passage in his 1927 New Testament commentary:

This equality of Christ with God is so to speak the fixed, *ultimate* background, from which his road sets out and to which it returns [...] Yet it is not of Christ’s equality with God that our passage would speak, but of what Christ, acting as God’s Equal, is, does and means. (Leitch 1962: 61)

A later commentator on the same text (Beare 1969: 31) writes that: ‘it is only by analogy with the entire theology of Paul (and of the New Testament and the church, for that matter), that we find in them a true doctrine of the incarnation.’ I cite this to note Kierkegaard’s literary congruence here both with later critical scholarship and with traditionally realised and defined orthodoxy. These points will become

¹ See Müller (1989: 83 –88) cited in Gouwens (1996: 125).

increasingly relevant to my argument as I explore some convergences of Christological understanding in the writings of Eliot and of Kierkegaard.

Paul's Christ-Hymn and Kierkegaard's God's Poem point with the pathos of appropriate form – a pathos elucidated by Kierkegaard in ensuing pages – to the humanly received paradox of incarnation, which is not to be glimpsed, let alone received, by Socratic maieutic recollection. For 'it is the omnipotence of resolving love to be capable of that which neither the king nor Socrates was capable, which is why *their* assumed characters [my italics] were still a kind of deceit.' (PF 32)

2. Kierkegaardian Themes: Idealism and History

The incisive and Christianly-subversive epigram of the literary polymath Gotthold Lessing (1729-81) that *accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason* (Chadwick 1956: 53) is the famous summary formulation of that writer's 'ugly ditch' scepticism about the validity of continuing truth-claims of biblical miracle accounts for a mind living eighteen centuries after their recorded occurrence. Amongst the leading thinkers of this Enlightenment period – which embraced Lessing's lifetime and career – there was a 'growing feeling that the world can be explained within itself; it is a closed system, and the supernatural is a closed or even unnecessary hypothesis.' Here Chadwick (1956: 36) summarises of an oft-remarked trend succinctly, one about which a younger scholar has commented with equal and developed point:

In view of the fact that the Enlightenment is now widely recognised as constituting the most significant development in the intellectual history of the Christian faith – far surpassing even the Reformation in this respect – it is proper to argue that it defines the *terminus a quo* from which any account of modern theology in general, and modern christology in particular, must begin./ [(McGrath (1986: 1), cited in Macquarrie (1990: 236)]

This was a climate of opinion in and to which Lessing both shared and contributed, as a pivotal figure devoting considerable skill, scholarship and acumen to promulgate it. By his own choice of epigraph on the title page of *Philosophical Fragments* Kierkegaard² signals a close concern, some verbal consonance and the (to be realised) potential for a counter-asserted critical riposte, constructively formulated from the substance of Lessing's position, the percipience of which he respected and admired.

Lessing opposes what I would call quantifying oneself into a qualitative decision; he contests the direct transition from historical reliability to a decision on an eternal happiness. (CUP 95-6)

The perspective adopted on a proposal or problem may be decisive for conclusion or for remedy. In this engagement Kierkegaard is doing battle, not just with Hellenic/Socratic epistemic models from the side of Hebraic/Christian, but also, and through this, with the later developed western idealistic tradition, on behalf of the Christian gospel, as he received and understood it, and he assesses and responds to issues of decisive importance on these and on other fronts. He asserts that:

² See PF 1, and PF 176-9 for process of composition.

The basis of the paradox of Christianity is that it continually uses time and the historical in relation to the eternal. (*CUP* 95)

And this has considerable parallel significance, but also potential contrast, with T.S. Eliot, in his distinct time and concerns, as we shall see.

The message of *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard's 'most abstract' work, is that there is no common term, no accessible linkage between these divergent epistemic processes. Gregor Malantschuk's designation of 'abstraction' is clearly accurate, if only somewhat qualified by my earlier literary analysis, and he identifies the essentially apologetic reason for Kierkegaard's approach here:

This abstract presentation was required in order to pose the problem as sharply as possible. A more historical-concrete account of this difference between the human and the Christian involves the danger that the boundaries would not be explicitly drawn. (Malantschuk 1971: 245)

The statement assumes the background of Kierkegaard's contemporary, anti-Hegelian polemical intent and interestingly connects with the work and later strategy, apparently less polemical but still actually apologetic, of the twentieth century poet, Eliot. In fact Kierkegaard focuses on the real core of Lessing's own 'subterranean' and presuppositionally sceptical objection here. Michalson (1985: 64) uses the term 'subterranean' – accurately - to denote Lessing's real orientation of belief and I am indebted to his work for this part of my discussion. The epistemological assumptions behind Kierkegaard's views themselves have, of course, primary and decisive anthropological and historical concomitants. By these the Socratic model of interrelationship is severely delimited, if not flawed, and the category of *history* becomes vital for the irruption of the teacher who is God into time. But it is the nature of this interest for Kierkegaard that requires careful discrimination.

Chapter Four of *Fragments*, 'The Contemporary Follower', makes it clear that apart from the dilution-effect of Christendom's subsequent riddling or even eliminating faith, in 'chatter' (*PF* 71), an expression perhaps best understood here as unreliable superfluities and accretions 'like the echo in some of our churches', as Kierkegaard pointedly observes, there is no advantage for the believer in having lived in first-century Galilee or Jerusalem. But at the heart of Kierkegaard's concern is always the matter of religious appropriation and 'the appropriation by which a Christian is a Christian must be so specific that it cannot be confused with anything else.' [(*CUP* 609)] and see also Michalson (1985: 73)). This entails for Kierkegaard, and also for Eliot, the Christological affirmations that I have noted above. For the Lutheran Kierkegaard the true contemporary (i.e. the genuine disciple or Christian) has decisively and actively come to believe in the paradox of the incarnation of God, the '... point of intersection of the timeless / With time' and through this has received faith as God's gift. See Malantschuk (1971: 303-4). All else is secondary to his concern - and Eliot's words from the concluding Section V of *The Dry Salvages* (*CPP* 189-90), so convergent with the approach and style of *Fragments*, are deliberately cited here. There are, of course, other theological issues of consequence in Kierkegaard's understanding of faith and of historical categories, developed by him at length in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, and with progeny that some later

apologists would consider fateful.³ But for my purposes here, as an introduction to my comparative reading of the later Eliot, climaxing in *Four Quartets*, these, together with other key themes and literary characteristics, have been outlined.

3. Eliot: Beyond Recollection to Mimetic Discovery before and after *The Waste Land*.

Turning to Eliot, we see that a deep change in perspective begins to take place in his later poetry. There is a steady emergence from nightmare, absence of affect and inchoate distant longing, into a more open realm of reciprocal discourse. This remains a multi-layered discourse, and one aware of the dark areas of consciousness, estrangement and 'primitive terror', but tone and perspective are now ruminatively different. *The Waste Land*'s motif of disconnection between human beings in unreal cities and on Margate sands is no longer final. These conditions are increasingly 'placed' and there is both insistent quest for, and belief in, the possibility of connection and of the continuity of selves in time and there is something now to say about this. This change is not of course a sudden leap but a process, chartable through the writings of the intervening period.⁴ There are also continuities of concern that remain although the modes of address and discourse are different.

The discovery of the *energy* for and behind that process is most obviously an increasingly confident *religious* energy (or hope), explicit but distant in the stasis (only) of 'The Hollow Men' and, with a different nuance, rendered strange, if not empty, for their mobilised successors, the journeying 'Magi' in active quest of revelation and thus finding a vacuum of any consolation in what has been known. In the earlier poem, the always intervening and inhibiting 'shadow' *gestures* fragmentally, through the juxtaposition of the echoes of prayer in the sequence, towards a 'kingdom', not one of 'death's dream' nor of 'twilight', but 'lost' and yet, still just possibly and somewhere else, *Thine*. But for the Magi, the later, returning midwinter travellers, wise and not hollow men, there is, with different nuance, the journey back to:

'... our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease ...'

A feared and perhaps only hypothetical kingdom of elsewhere, fitfully glimpsed by the Hollow Men who do not move, is, for the Magi, the experience at their journey's goal of an alienation from the currently and actually familiar, the 'hard and bitter agony' of a death-like birth that displaces all prior belonging. This is an important shift in perspective, because it *is* mobile, and the continuing negativities should not be allowed to occlude this real development. The 'fading star' of the earlier poem still

³ Michalson (1985) and Macquarrie (1990:240-5) provide a helpful preliminary overview of some of these theological issues. See also Gunton (1997:139-43) for succinct and illuminating comment on Kierkegaard and Lessing.

⁴ "Of course, Eliot in no sense expected his conversion to proceed in the manner described by Christian Fundamentalists. Through conversion he merely hoped to escape the *accidia* or dryness of soul which he felt was leading him to an intolerable state of mind and soul – the *ennui* which he mentioned in his essay on Baudelaire as 'arising from the unsuccessful struggle towards the spiritual life.'" [(Davidson (1999: 41) The Baudelaire reference is from *SE* 385.)]

has a 'twinkle', which can of course deceive, but in the 'Magi' no (guiding) star is mentioned and only broken sleep and mocking voices accompany those who:

'At the end ... preferred to travel all night ...'

They have to 'go into the dark'.⁵ Although there is indeed progress of a kind, and an achieved goal, there is a correspondingly intensified and held pressure of ambivalence, itself constituting another aspect of the progress. This is expressed, to modify a phrase from Eliot, through a 'concrete presence forced upon us,' (*FLA* 22) placing the ambivalence in real time and thus actualising a felt, perceptible focus on a spiritual condition of acute and lonely transition. The 'refractory' camels in the winter melting snow and the unfriendliness and the exploitation of the travellers' experience are contrasted with their reclining leisurely memories of summer palaces, girls and sherbet. But of the 'Birth, certainly' there could be no doubt. The capital 'B' here is significant and Childs (1997) relates the emphatic reference to Eliot's negatively critical concerns, as a book reviewer, with published works of theological modernism at the time. But Eliot also never lost a fundamental sympathy with the constructive impetus to such experimental projects. For example he approved or, at least, expressed sympathetic understanding of, the reasons for the theological correlative methods of Paul Tillich (a writer himself much influenced by Kierkegaard). Indeed Christianity's continuing characteristic of being *adaptable* to belief was something that appealed both to Eliot's sense of evolving tradition and to the complex sceptical aspects of his personality and approach. Alongside this, he decisively strove to leave behind features of his Unitarian nurture, specifically in its rejection of belief in the Incarnate Christ at the heart of the orthodox understanding of Trinity. Indeed if any one Christian doctrine can be isolated as pivotal to both Lutheran Kierkegaard and to Anglican Eliot, it is this one.

The issue of appropriation is a primary one for Kierkegaard and, as his work develops, so there is a parallel kind of interest in Eliot's poetry, which can also be seen to track or narrate indirectly, how this takes place. For each writer, when operating in imaginative mode, this may sometimes appear to supersede some of the presenting concerns behind more obviously doctrinal debates. As Kierkegaard/Climacus wrote, resuming (in the *Postscript*) consideration of the theme of *Fragments*: 'there is no direct and immediate transition to Christianity.' (*CUP* 49) The crisis of dislocation experienced by Eliot's Magi has to be understood beyond any cognitive categories that have been serviceable to them until now. There has been a break with the past as giver of meaning and recollection of what has gone before is no longer enough. No retrospective appeal to history, in the personal or wider sphere, will suffice but, equally, there is certainty that something mysteriously decisive has occurred *in* history. Brooker (1994: 158-9) in a discussion of *Four Quartets* helpfully notes Eliot's continuing preoccupation with intermediate states in relation, noting that 'betweenness' is at the heart of 'The Hollow Men'. She charts in the later poems a focus on the relations of opposites that:

... leads readers to an absence or gap or a puzzle and then leaves them there to reflect on what can only be guessed, glimpsed, imagined, half-heard.

⁵ See 'East Coker' III, *CPP* 180.

This describes precisely the crisis of alienation at the heart of 'The Journey of the Magi' and the encounter with the Incarnation is the precipitant of this. The poem is dated 1927 and in the following year appeared Eliot's prose testimony-volume *For Lancelot Andrewes*, the title-essay of which affords an obviously significant gloss. Eliot's original turn of the words about 'concrete presence' cited above, referred of course to Andrewes (*FLA* 22), and his words about the preacher's intent and manner of writing are prefaced by the phrase '... before extracting all the spiritual meaning of a text ...' This is close to Eliot's own emerging method, the intensified, open-discourse elucidation of realised image and delineated, evoked experience: the approach that was to fructify in *Four Quartets*. Brooker notes that Eliot's 'method is reminiscent of Socrates' method whereby he systematically nonplussed his auditors or led them to an aporia or a fertile impasse.' (Brooker 1994: 159) The observation supports and reinforces something of the Eliot/Kierkegaard analogy of approach that I am here concerned to make but it does not allow for the significant qualification of the Christological contrast of both kind and degree in Kierkegaard against 'the light Socratic summer cloak ... woven from nothing'. (*PF* 32)

As is well known, the first five lines of the 'The Magi', in quotes, are taken almost exactly from a sermon of Andrewes.⁶ A later commentator on this extended passage in Andrewes's original text (Lossky 1991: 94) illustrates congruence of method between preacher and poet:

The concrete character of the description reveals Andrewes's curiosity of mind about the geographical and climactic region, but this curiosity is not an end in itself. The difficulties encountered by the *magi* are there to bring out the quality of their faith, soon to be contrasted with the laziness and lukewarmness of Western Christians when it is a matter of making an effort to make their faith concrete.

We may cite Kierkegaard/Climacus on 'The Follower at Second Hand' to encapsulate the homiletic intentions of Andrewes and, no doubt, of Eliot:

The latest generation has the advantage of ease, but as soon as it discovers that this ease is the very dubiousness that begets the difficulty, then this difficulty will correspond to the difficulty of the terror, and the terror will grip the last generation just as primitively as it gripped the first generation of secondary followers. (*PF* 99)

But the historical Magi were very *early* followers.⁷ The re-visioning of apparently familiar sentimentalised narrative experience in Eliot's poem may indeed shock the traditional Epiphany-tide worshipper. The later poet of place, notably in *The Dry Salvages*, exploited, with more precision of texture and detailed, rugged location to denote and to reinforce spiritual drama and quality, continuing to adapt, more and more allusively, the method of Andrewes.

⁶ *CPP* 133, see Andrewes *Works*, Vol. 1, Nativity 15, p. 257, cited by Lossky (1991: 93-4). The main part of Andrewes' text, with modernised spelling, Latinisms deleted and rhythmic thrust retained, can be found in Scott (2001: 42-3).

⁷ I am of course aware of the modern critical tendency to see the narration in Matthew 2 as unhistorical *midrash* but Eliot, whether fictively or otherwise, and Andrewes indubitably, both assume historicity.

We have noted in Kierkegaard the use of image through narrative, after abstraction, (aesthetic rewriting) to give pathos and depth to argument and exposition and a similar approach will be observed in *Four Quartets*. That these features were in part learned by Eliot from Andrewes, scholar-theologian and linguist of the Anglican settlement, rooted in the medieval and patristic past, east and west, is already suggested. There is more: in the evolving method of Andrewes's Christmas sermons theological exposition of scholarly and conceptual rigour shifts linguistically into a fusion of sensuous image and intellectual expansion, even paradox. This was the characteristic noted by Eliot among others in seventeenth-century English poetry and it can be found in the Anglican preaching of that time. Andrewes's approach, writes Lossky (1991: 41-2):

... transcends the confines of the intellect and brings the hearer face to face with a vision in which he can only contemplate simultaneously several terms that logically either succeed one another or exclude one another. The type of apprehension to which he is here making appeal is naturally comparable to the apprehension of a poem.

Eliot learned both poetically and doctrinally from this source and the pivotal place of Andrewes in his journey of faith and his personal location in the Church of England cannot be overstressed. Allchin (1981: 56-7), Bush (1984: 109-11) and Gordon (1998: 212-13) each stress this from ecclesial, literary and biographical perspectives respectively. Andrewes the preacher/pastor to a royal court, a theologically literate congregation, is also one for whom *appropriation* above all else is primary. Familiarity with the density of his allusions and argument notwithstanding we should note that:

Andrewes never develops any doctrine for the love of abstract theological speculation; with him theology is manifest as essentially *mystical*, in the sense that any formulation of Christian teaching is only of value for the practical implications it must necessarily have in the spiritual life which leads all the time to union with God. (Lossky 1991: 32)

Again some consonance with Kierkegaard's avowed purpose in his multiple authorship is clear, though the traditions in Christendom, the historical location, position of office and strategy that each represents markedly diverge. The scholar-Bishop and the apologist 'without authority' share a goal to communicate the essence and practice of the life of faith. They also converge, over differences improbably traversed, but with still more profound similarities of concern and of differentiated but perceptible gift, in *method*. Both men deal in paradox, both conflate stylistics and both invoke the sensual to convey the transcendent and metaphysical.

The author of *Fragments* has deliberately highlighted to a point of disjunction the epistemic impasse that is to be crossed when engagement with the god who 'is absolutely different from a human being' (PF 46) takes place. The narration of the Magi, disconnected from their past (Eliot out of Andrewes) to a point where experiences of birth and of death con-fuse, is a first-person realised account of that disjunction, athwart the popular image of semi-numinous visitant sages and kings and from the perspective of afterthought and return. This god who is so different has drawn near in the Christian understanding of incarnation.

The opening of 'the Journey of the Magi' is not of course the first citation from Andrewes in Eliot's poetry. 'Gerontion', ll. 17-20 also has direct allusion⁸ but here the citation is less exact, and the *word* (lower case for Eliot here, capital for Andrewes) is 'swaddled with darkness'.⁹ Some retrospective discussion of 'Gerontion' is apposite at this point. Currently one of the most debated and controversial poems of the earlier Eliot, 'Gerontion' contemplates without affect the disintegration that, later, *The Waste Land* was to actualise, as I have discussed in the previous chapter.¹⁰ Indeed, at one point Eliot had wanted to make 'Gerontion' the opening motif of the longer poem until dissuaded by Pound. Ricks (1988:125) sees the sacrifice of Christ and its consequences as the dominant concern in 'Gerontion' but this is veiled, paradoxical and out of any finally demonstrable reach. For Kearns (1987:44, 48-9) the poem is (convincingly) about the conflict between apprehension of the sensual world and ascetic withdrawal, repulsion from bodily functions and sacrificial confusion and I suggest that part of this conflict may be that of Indic and ancient Greek responses to materiality against Christian and Hebraic understandings, a tension to be later more satisfactorily resolved in Eliot's verse. It has been said that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures is a 'historian not a philosopher'.

Howbeit, the category of 'history' is problematic for Gerontion, the little old man 'waiting for rain', who nevertheless and inevitably experiences seasonal shift sometimes as threat requiring withdrawal, as the poet of *The Waste Land* was to do, more explicitly. The church's liturgical year, tied to seasonal shift integrated with the redemptive cycle of Christ, also follows its course, albeit without impact of understanding for Gerontion, as in Constantin's Ash Wednesday visit in *Repetition* discussed in my previous chapter. History is cunning, deceptive, teasing and he has missed its major battles and significances, receiving only its ambiguous and hurtful gifts too late or without contemporaneous recognition. Although the seasons turn and an apprehended Christ looms threateningly, he is yet only half received with understanding by a strange international 'non-gathering' of atomised individuals, a judas-blossom amongst whispers, in 'a rich context of sad meaning'. The phrase is John Crowe Ransom's from his essay 'Gerontion' in Tate (1966:149). Eliot's variegated world here of menace, withdrawal and strangers communicates a more troubling level of meaning than that conveyed by Kierkegaard's humorous visitor from the aesthetic phase of his authorship. Constantin's lack of self-insight makes him one-dimensional as a fictive representation; an ironically comic stooge-character in the landscape of his textual setting, but his true plight in Kierkegaardian terms is to be as lost as that of Eliot's old man, who is also in a condition of aesthetic arrest.

⁸ *Works*, vol. 1, Nativity 12, p. 204 [cited Lossky (1991: 50)].

⁹ *CPP* 37. Andrewes wrote 'swaddling *bands* of darkness', alluding to the infant's clothes (Luke 1.12) and to the darkness motif of John 1, as well as to Job 38.8 ff., after the manner of patristic typology and Byzantine hymnody. His multiple allusions are rooted in his familiarity with these sources. See Lossky (1991: 40, 50).

¹⁰ The startlingly explicit and difficult-to refute anti-Semitic tone of 'Gerontion' has been discussed by Ricks (1988: 122-5) and accentuated in response by Julius (1995:41-74). Clearly any serious overall assessment of Eliot must engage with the concerns brought out by this and I turn to them later. 'Half Jews we all are in this point,' preached Andrewes in 1618, 'we would have a Messiah in state.' Childs (1997) makes this link with 'Gerontion' in a most interesting discussion but one that does not address Julius' quite different points.

Like Gerontion, Constantin is a 'vanishing person' (*R* 230) who can show some theoretical understanding of the movement towards the transcendent that the Young Man makes as poet, but without any of Gerontion's peeved argumentative sense of loss. He is 'vanishing' because he can outline the progress of the Young Man persuasively, from 'below', but he cannot accompany him. This lack of an engaged, actively experiential knowledge is the Socratic form of that of 'the person who is born by dying away more and more can less and less be said to be born ...' (*PF* 31) Whatever the presenting bleakness of their experience the Magi cross this experiential frontier, whereas Constantin in comic mode and Gerontion in bleak withdrawal, finally hollow men both, remain fixed. In a notably authoritative but perhaps over-ingenious reading of 'Gerontion', Jewel Spears Brooker depicts the speaker of the dramatic monologue as a 'withered Socrates' with 'an arid brain', thinking and waiting for rain (Brooker 1994:92,136). Placing Christ firmly at the centre of the poem's de-centred meaning Brooker (102-3) focuses climatically on the aridity of the 'Think now' and the poet's rejection of an arid rationality that Kierkegaard in his earlier time so ardently opposed and for similar reasons but from a different historical location:

This deep suspicion of discursive intelligence ... [as] the main cause of the devastation of the early twentieth century ... where knowledge divorced from value is largely responsible for the curse that has settled in upon the modern world.

For Ransom, 'history', personified in the third paragraph of the poem is the deceiving temptress of Gerontion's apostasy causing him to question any possibility of forgiveness after such knowledge. (Tate 1966:151) It is as if the cognitive *impasse* of Kierkegaard's reading of the Socratic power of memory and an innate intrinsic truth to be uncovered has returned or flowered depraved, eclipsing secure hope. In 'Gerontion' as in Kierkegaard the category of history becomes vital for the irruption of the teacher who is God into time and the scepticism of a Lessing, with all its ambivalent drive of 'earnest jest',¹¹ is present in Gerontion's eloquent self-justification. Ransom (in Tate 1966:151) sees this passage in 'Gerontion' as addressed to a silent Christ. The idea is a tantalising one, but not demonstrable from the text. Ricks (1988:124) in his own widely referenced discussion of this passage writes of a darkening 'to the maze of modern history or rather of history modernly seen.' The distinction is indeed crucial and the tonally archaic and forced rhetoric of Gerontion's 'I would meet you upon this honestly' reveals a defensive edge in that asserted self-justification. Kierkegaard/Climacus wrote what is both true and untrue of this type of poem and this type of protagonist:

The existing poet who suffers in existence does not, however, comprehend the suffering in this way. He does not concentrate upon it but in the suffering seeks to escape the suffering and to find alleviation in the poetic production, in the poetic anticipation of a more perfect (a happier) order of things.
(*CUP* 444)

¹¹ For this important Kierkegaardian phrase applied to Lessing, with latent double irony applicable to the author, see *CUP* 69-71.

This is precisely the situation of the Young Man in *Repetition* and it is one that is existentially ahead of that of his mentor, Constantin, although, as an ironist, he analyses it for us accurately in his *Concluding Letter* (R 229): 'He keeps a religious mood as a secret he cannot explain, while at the same time this secret helps him poetically to explain actuality.' The 'dithyrambic joy' in the Young Man's last letter (R 228) is a liberating exaltation with the possibility of a further growth. He is, we might say, too *young* not to experience it in this way and his anticipation, rooted but hidden in the religious, could ultimately go beyond the poetic. But Eliot's Gerontion is different and *old*. There is extraordinarily affective poetic actualisation of a condition of aesthetic and cognitive stasis in 'Gerontion', qualitatively distinct from the comedy of *Repetition*, but there is also alleviation in the 'production' *without any* anticipation of anything better. There is a later (arrested) gesture towards alleviation in *The Waste Land* but by the *Four Quartets* Eliot does something quite different with both the alleviation and the anticipation.

'Chatter' and the deceptive corridors of an idolised historicity or a poeticised or detached actuality still do not negate the possibility of becoming a 'contemporary follower'. Kierkegaard and Andrewes, Eliot's mentor here, concur in the availability, possibility and necessity of a 'religious appropriation' of faith in the incarnate god. It is as much at the centre of those works of Andrewes by which Eliot was most deeply influenced, as it is the concern of the author of *Fragments*. But 'Gerontion' is more about the waste sad lack of this. The devouring (tiger) of the Word leaping in the 'juvencence of the year' is an energised threatening image of resurrection. Andrewes, for whom Christ was not a 'wild cat', resounded in his Easter preaching:

... with the hope and joy that emanate from the Passion-Resurrection of Christ [...] it is necessary to go back to the great 'mystics' of the fourteenth century, such as Julian of Norwich, to retrieve the same link with the breadth of optimism of the great patristic period that Andrewes forged again with a vigour that was to inspire numerous preachers of his own time and afterwards. (Lossky 1991: 154)

That 'waste sad' lack we may be sure was a diagnostic experience of life in their respective times for Kierkegaard and for Eliot, though analogies should not be forced. The gestures, sober and exultant by turn of 'resounding' notes of faith that Eliot attained in, definitively, *Little Gidding* are, as we shall see, in considerable measure, achieved by expertly contrived echoes or transcriptions from a linguistically idealized Christian past, emblematised in a Nicholas Farrar or a Juliana of Norwich. However 'ridiculous' the given contemporary condition may be, it is not so easily redeemed from the 'unpropitious' as both writers (and Lawrence) well knew. But Kierkegaard and Eliot retrieve, albeit differently, formational and inductive approaches to knowledge from the earliest centuries of Christianity, that period that is still frequently accorded some kind of normative status in theological reflection.

But in the 'depraved May' of 'Gerontion' the trees have no creative/redemptive succour, proffering neither life nor new life. There is withdrawal, in this most troubled and troubling poem, to an 'after dinner sleep' and the epigraph from *Measure for Measure* catches its three-fold theme of aging in missed time, eating/devouring and withdrawal. 'The rented house', in which Gerontion joylessly stiffens, denotes an experience of prostitution that is spiritual and/or actual, probably both, thus drawing

its essential impact from ancient biblical traditions, of which there are many Old Testament examples. For example, and strikingly, the Book of Hosea parallels the prophet's marriage to an unfaithful prostitute with the betrayal of God's covenant with his apostate people. The 'word' of 'Gerontion' is indeed the 'lost word' to be responded to later and progressively by the 'lost heart' stiffening and rejoicing in *Ash Wednesday* (1930) at 'the time of the tension between dying and birth.' In Kierkegaardian terms this is indeed old age in aesthetic arrest, misreading and haplessly resisting the existential embrace of the life-giving category of the religious, here seen only (and finally) as threat. Eliot was to climax his final *Quartet* with a direct citation from Juliana of Norwich, accessing continuity with that past optimism to which Lossky, perhaps recalling Eliot, referred above.

Between 'The Hollow Men' and 'The Magi' there comes this differently accentuated *stasis* of *Ash Wednesday*, the seminal poem of Eliot's unhopd-for turning. However its iterative style – a serious development from *Prufrock* – and the iconic refined pathos of the 'veiled sister' notwithstanding – only serve to give parts of this poem a set-piece feel, statuesque and less vital in this charted process towards a steadier purchase on historicity/actuality, the penultimate climax of which, before *Burnt Norton*, is 'Marina'.

In 'Marina' the images of journeying, sensory image, face and grace, are further developed from *Ash Wednesday*. The emergent authentic lost-and-found child renders 'insubstantial' the fourfold death images that furnish such a rhythmic and substantive contrast to the modulating yet clear drive of the poem's deep structural movement and its explicitly imaged goal:

The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships. (CPP 110)

Indeed the poem's epigraph from Seneca's *Hercules Furens* is placed there by Eliot to signal an intended contrast of 'recognition scenes', a criss-cross between Pericles' finding his daughter alive and Hercules' discovery that he has murdered his wife and children.¹²

The new land and the woodthrush's call ('through the fog') are coming *towards* the speaker of the poem, who has been given a redeemed and self-transcending future in time: 'My daughter'.¹³ There are here gentleness and hope beyond despair and destructive forces of animosity as well as beyond that unconvincing dogmatism that may be only a despair feared and suppressed or a hope not fully apprehended.¹⁴ An en-fleshed hope is so much more than:

... an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation

And it requires a different mode of expression.

¹² See his letter to Magdalene College, Cambridge, cited by Murray (1991:210).

¹³ Two useful recent discussions of 'Marina' are Murray (1991:209-14), who gives important formative background, and Rix (1988: 230-7), who offers an affirmative critical reading in the context of Eliot's later development.

¹⁴ As in *After Strange Gods, A Primer of Modern Heresy* (1933), which Eliot later repressed.

In 'Marina' the language of dialectic is cross-referred and pointed up by image and presence 'forced (now gently) upon us', and through which the reader is given a further dimension of warmth and 'pathos' (Kierkegaard's term). 'Grace' is the only theological term in a text that serves to incarnate these qualities in a manner never before seen in Eliot. The religious and the humane are become unified.

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CHAPTER SIX

The Genius Outside the Universal – Lawrence’s Writings

Thus the genius is placed outside the universal. He is great by reason of his belief in fate whether he conquers or falls, for he conquers by himself and falls by himself, or rather, both are by fate. Usually his greatness is admired only when he conquers, and yet he is never greater than when he falls by his own hand. (CA 100)

1. Linkages and Contrasts.

Because his faith-journey involved an unusual complex mediation of sources Eliot’s imaginative use of primary scripture is seldom by direct reference and when this is the case it generally does not seem to come from the centre of his creative imagination.¹ I have reservations about Julius’s discussion of ‘Song for Simeon’, but I find it more persuasive than his immediately preceding comments on ‘Gerontion’.² Simeon as a Jew is assimilated without empathy into a Christian discourse that then proceeds to possess his significance. It could not fairly be said of Eliot what Wright (Wright 2000: 1, 251) has justly written of Lawrence that the Bible is the text which his own work ‘... most obviously and most often reworks.’ This is because Eliot works with a highly consciously controlled and mediated *tradition*.

But with regard to Lawrence, argues Wright:

The Bible can [still] legitimately be called the genesis of his [Lawrence’s] fiction, its most significant precursor text; it not only generates a great deal of his own writing but provides the most important context for its understanding.

Lawrence’s chapel Protestant background (so despised and misunderstood by Eliot) gave him direct and continuing exposure to the scriptures (*sola scriptura* almost) and whilst in his maturity there were diverse critical, anthropological and imaginatively significant and libertarian ‘mediating intertexts’ (Wright 2000: 12) they were not so intricately diverse and academically focused as Eliot’s, whose starting-out, culturally at least, was less Protestant and neither so textually explicit nor so confined. Predictably and profoundly, the two writers also differ substantially about the λόγος.

This term, already discussed, could be said to be at the symbolic and linguistic storm centre of the ‘nineteenth-century distinction between the Hebraic and the Hellenistic’ (Julius 1995:199) and of the ideologically murderous use to which later this was put. The ‘heretical’ Lawrence³ rejected the ‘Hellenistic’, in the form of the Platonic, with

¹ Notoriously his Revised Version citation of Ezekiel 13.3-4 and 14.3 in ASG 61-2. It reads as homiletically intrusive, more awkward and less coherently integrated than his Hellenic-prophetic prefatory citation from Sophocles. (*Oedipus Rex* 1.460-462)

² If Julius’ gloss on the opening three words (‘Here I am’) does in fact relate ‘Gerontion’ to the Akedah, about which Kierkegaard meditated so memorably, then Eliot’s scriptural intertextuality is even flatter and more opaque than I argue.

³ Eliot’s description: ‘an almost perfect example,’ (ASG 38) reluctantly accepted by, amongst others, Sandra Gilbert (1990). That Eliot is however inventing his own rules of discourse in this strange, sometimes insightful but notorious text is shown in his absurd exalting of James Joyce as ‘orthodox’! With a superb use of Kierkegaardian categories, Julius (152) notes the intellectual subterfuge of Eliot’s

sarcastic emphasis in his poem 'St John'. Note his satiric mock-rhetorical psalmody, rich in biblical echoes and iteratively and polemically insightful. Of the Biblical Psalms he wrote that they:

... are really antipathetic to the modern mind, because the modern mind is so abstracted and logical, it cannot bear the non-logical imagery of the Hebrew hymns, the sort of confusion, the never going straight ahead. But there *was* no straight ahead to the ancient mind. An image, an emotional conception completed itself, then gave place to another, and sometimes even the emotional sequence is puzzling, because the images started different trains of feeling then, from those they start now. (*A* 195)

This 'modern mind' is a familiar *bête noire* to Lawrence, of course, and here he is scarcely giving an accurate exposition of the often-purposive inner logic of biblical psalmody. But his comments on imagery are insightful and the progressive argumentative repetitiveness that is so marked a feature of some of his prose and of some of his verse is surely derived from this source, though the rhetorical influences are wider too as these lines from his poem 'St John' demonstrate:

The Logos, the logos!
"In the beginning was the Word."

Is there not a great Mind pre-ordaining?
Does not a supreme Intellect ideally procreate the Universe?
Is not each soul a vivid thought in the great consciousness stream of God?

Put salt on his tail
The sly bird of John.

Proud intellect, high-soaring Mind
Like a king eagle, bird of the most High, sweeping the round of heaven

And casting the cycles of creation
On two wings like a pair of compasses;
Jesus' pale and lambent dove, cooing in the lower boughs
On sufferance.

In the beginning was the Word, of course,
And the word was the first offspring of the almighty Johannine mind,
Chick of the intellectual eagle.

Yet put salt on the tail of the Johannine bird
Put salt on its tail
John's eagle. (*TCP* 328-9)

'ethically orthodox' ascription (also questionable) and what in effect is an '*aesthetic*' misconnection with the '*theological*'. Having noted this, however, there is more justice in Eliot's distinctive Christian comments about Lawrence in this text than is comfortably assumed. Gilbert, critically astute but theologically confused, is a telling instance both of the justice and the discomfort.

The anti-Hellenistic process for Lawrence is beginning in his 1920 poem and it is close to what was to inform the Wolosky critique of Eliot.⁴ It is anti-Idealistic, it presents a Renan-like image of a ‘chick’ and ‘cooing’ Jesus,⁵ subordinate in the ‘lower boughs’, sufferings mocked, and absurdly divided from the abstracted all-surveying logos that is heading for a (fortunate) fall, which the prophet of Apocalypse (Lawrence’s final and characteristically idiosyncratic dialogical concern) will interpret:

Make it roost in bird-spattered, rocky Patmos
And let it moult there, among the stones of the bitter sea.

This is *kenosis* and *hubris*! The classical ring of ‘bitter sea’ suggests that a purgative phase could precede a new birth. But the Phoenix (only an Insurance Company now) is burning in its nest and the simile fledgling is ‘wan’. The tone of this type of Lawrence poem is cockily assertive – very different from the grave stylistic repetition in late Eliot. Such poems furnish a kind of ‘Clapham omnibus’ dramatic monologue, ‘agin’ and strident, but this descriptive mode may camouflage the range of the polemically supple critical intelligence that informs and directs the argument. He is privileging the tactile at the expense of the abstract, something Eliot did not always find easy. John’s logos, according to Lawrence here, is self-created and totalising in its embrace: an un-assailed word but heading for a fall.

It is inappropriate to overstress the Biblicism of language in Lawrence here, particularly given the preceding comments, but the rhetorical questioning, the plaint of this piece, as well as its repetitively cumulative psalm-like progressions may be sourced in scripture. Similes dialectically undermine the sublimity of a traditional image (as in ‘On two wings like a pair of compasses’ which both recalls a Blake painting and ‘mechanises’ creation). There is an underlying satiric seriousness of intended statement throughout, however unjust to its declared subject as a whole, Lawrence’s poem is judged to be. It operates too through a confluence of speech-registers that are predominantly anecdotal and mock-learned. The ontological drivers that he found in Lawrence’s writing drew Michael Bell to use (the contemporaneous) Heidegger as a hermeneutical cipher. I have sought to demonstrate here a convergence of sorts with Wolosky’s attack on Eliot’s poetic rhetoric, a critique that I believe should be considerably modified, even as I also accept some of the underlying point of her post-modern disquiet.

Eliot privileged a tradition of belief and utterance; his doctrine is mediated through many twists and turns but it is *doctrinally* sourced and closely guarded. By contrast Lawrence exploits primary religious speech-patterns in novel and, for his time, seriously and intentionally shocking ways and avowedly stands alone (impossible though that is) from any but his own heteroglottic variant communities (or

⁴ I am not suggesting any direct relationship of course but rather a remarkable overlap of insights. Wolosky’s austere scholarly tone is a far remove from Lawrence’s deceptively slight and satirical *riposte*.

⁵ The young Lawrence wrote to the Revd. Robert Reid in 1907 that he had read Renan amongst other critical writers. His ensuing letter claims that he does not ‘cannot believe in the divinity of Jesus.’ (Worthen 1992: 175) Joseph Renan (1823-92) created a critical furore with his *Vie de Jésus* published in 1863 which removed all supernatural accretions from the biography of Christ, instead presenting him as an amiable preacher of brotherhood. For Renan and Lawrence see Wright (2000: 32-4).

soliloquies) of discourse. In favour of Eliot's stance (which is not the same thing as acknowledging an always successful practice) remains an axiom with which Postmodernity has always to consider and counter. For the scripturally mediated faith-traditions, as Janet Martin Soskice writes:

A favoured model continues to be so in virtue of its own applicability certainly, but also because the history of its application makes it already freighted with meaning. To say that God is 'king' recalls a whole history of kingship and insubordination recorded in the biblical texts. These metaphors retain their metaphorical nature but they have become more than simply metaphor – they are almost emblematic - and if one were to undertake a study, not of the use of metaphor in religious language, but of the specific sense of Christian metaphorical uses, it would, in a great part, be a study of gloss upon gloss, use and re-use of the figures which comprise an interweaving of meanings so complex that the possible readings are never exhausted.
(Soskice 1985: 158)

Soskice here refers to a communitarian and ongoing churchly reading of scripture within a culture (or cultures) of some restraint. Limits, if not explicitly, are certainly implicitly acknowledged. But these limits may and indeed must be constantly pushed forward and revised, something that is fully acknowledged by Soskice in a later important essay (Soskice 1993: 43-59) that argues eloquently for the situated inevitability of all religious and theological discourse and against an earlier totalising cognitive certainty that we should now find hard to defend. She is here referring in detail and as a critical paradigm to the controversial doctrinal correspondence in 1539 between Cardinal James Sadolet, who argued that Geneva should return to the obedience of Rome, and the Reformer John Calvin who (unsurprisingly) did not agree.

Truth may be one for God, but Calvin and Sadolet were misguided in thinking it one for us. We may know the unknowable God truly in the knowledge of love, but as far as our cognitive knowing goes, we know in part and we know in progress. (Soskice 1993: 59)

Soskice writes here from a context that Lawrence would have found antipathetic and in an era that he could not have foreseen but he would have concurred with her second (1993) sentence cited just as he would have resisted the drift of her 1985 observations. Because what Lawrence does is to terminate and to exclude, often enough in a quest for new meaning or in order to disinter and newly mint what in his view was ancient and had got lost. The case for this in Lawrence is well made by Wright (2000: 18), utilising the Cabbalistic interpretative strategies of Harold Bloom, a magisterial Jewish critic and one sympathetic to Lawrence. Bloom goes beyond 'weak reading [of scripture] permitted by orthodoxy' drawing on models with a more dynamic relation to tradition that were learned by him from Kierkegaard and from Nietzsche. Though Nietzsche figured strongly for Lawrence (misleading his readings of scripture), Kierkegaard, scarcely an explicitly conscious precursor, is nevertheless an instructive one.

2. Kierkegaardian Introduction – Genius and Apostle Revisited

‘Lawrence, contemplating himself, could discover genius ...’ (Black 1986: 37) The pertinacity, the isolation and the seldom-deflected confidence in forging ahead (to be further evaluated) are each present in that phrase, which is applied, in the context cited here, to a notably *young* man. Among many contemporaries, Frieda Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Catherine Carswell, and, grudgingly, Richard Aldington, Bertrand Russell and, above all, T.S. Eliot,⁶ have each used or explicitly conveyed the description of ‘genius’ with reference to Lawrence and the list could be much extended. Aldington’s highlighted *But* ... has often accompanied the designation in some form or another.⁷

This term ‘genius’ meant much to Kierkegaard as well, writing, as he did, in the period of its assumed ascendancy to its still dominant meaning.⁸ He designated himself a ‘religious genius’ (Malantschuk 1971: 268), a typically modern formulation that bristles with category problems unless it is clearly understood that the two terms in fact qualify each other from within discreet characteristics and do not represent any notionally excessive capacity or talent in the realm of the devout (CA 247, footnote 48).⁹ Donald MacKinnon’s emphatic words, written within a broadly Kierkegaardian context of reference, are incisive comment here:

Indeed, concentration of attention on such a supposed human endowment [as the religious] might encourage the illusion that by its disciplined cultivation men and women could achieve for themselves a kind of spiritual maturity that would entitle them to be regarded, and indeed to regard themselves, as masters in much that pertained to the relations of creature to Creator. (MacKinnon 1979: 166. Interpolation mine.¹⁰)

SK’s literary/dialectical position was always sceptical of his century’s essentially Romantic concern with and belief in the expressive self¹¹ and its tendency to illusion or to Titanism. That is a focal interest in the first phase of his writings, notably *Either/Or Part One* and the purported ethical critique in *Part Two* of the same work.

⁶ For Eliot see *ASG* 58-61. For Frieda Lawrence see Lawrence in Jackson (1994: 102); Huxley in *Introduction* to Huxley (ed. 1932 *passim*); Carswell in Carswell (1932 *passim*), Aldington in Aldington (1950 *passim*); Russell in Russell (1971: 20-4, 53-6).

⁷ Concerning which, Ellis (1998:535) has commented pertinently: “‘Genius’ allowed one to avoid the possibility of thinking too closely about what kind of writer Lawrence was, and the ‘but’ then permitted a very wide range of qualification.”

⁸ *COD* 1990:491 gives as first meaning of the term: ‘a an exceptional intellectual or creative power or other natural ability or tendency. b a person having this.’ For a helpful brief summary of the evolution in meaning of the term see Williams (1983:143-4).

⁹ Baillie (1960:98-9) recapitulates the distinctive theological point, but see CA 102, 107-10, for Kierkegaard’s depiction of the burdens to be assumed by such a consciously assumed self-designation.

¹⁰ So what did the earlier Donald MacKinnon (MacKinnon 1968: 161) mean by describing SK, in a lecture, as ‘a religious genius’ with reference to Hegel? The implication may be that Kierkegaard possessed a quality that in measure, despite his spiritual and intellectual range, the other lacked. In ‘Some Notes On Kierkegaard’, a concentrated, suggestive essay of value still, from the same 1968 volume *Borderlands of Theology and Other Essays*, he concludes that ‘he teaches us best again when he does not deliver to us a doctrine, but rather suggests to us a method; his word is never the last word.’ This prefigures the numbers of contemporary scholars who (rightly now) compare Kierkegaard with Wittgenstein! See Gouwens (1996: 17-22); Wood (1998: 54-7); Crowder (1999), which is also a consideration of *influence*, Vardy (2003: 142). Roger Poole (Poole 2003a: 1) notes that MacKinnon supervised his Doctoral Research in Kierkegaard in 1963, an unfashionable time for such a subject in Cambridge and a task undertaken with characteristic perception and commitment.

¹¹ See my *Appendix A: ‘Modernity’ and ‘Postmodernity’: A Note On Features And Terms*.

His life-project as a religious writer increasingly focused on key distinctions that account for and illuminate his project but they are of course terminologically rooted in his time and culture. For Kierkegaard, genius is an ‘essentially Aesthetic category’ (see my closing remarks in chapter two of this thesis) and such *authority* as a genius has is based, it is claimed, on the unsupported inner power and, perhaps, manifest depth and talent behind his production. Kierkegaard himself wrote ‘without authority’ (*BOA* 26-7; 178) as a tactically honest and deliberate stance, in spite of the ‘open secret’ of his pseudonymous authorial strategy. This, of course, was finally abandoned under an increasingly personal pressure to express an ethical/religious offensive of direct communication and life witness. Observed notions of *authority* steadily assume a more decisive and refined importance as his solitary authorship evolves (*BOA* vi-xii) and his prolonged dealing with the case of Magister Adolph Peter Adler touched on that question, profoundly, at many points.

In his posthumously published *Book on Adler*, completed 1846-7¹², Kierkegaard considered two notable ‘confusions of the age’ that between the ‘genius’ and the ‘apostle’, which I have already noted,¹³ and that between two kinds of writer, the ‘premise-author’ and the ‘essential author’, to which I now turn. (*BOA* 11-15) These two pairs of distinctions are related to each other but they are not precise equivalences. The premise-author is a bogus writer who has ‘premises for living but no conclusions’. He is thus defective in teleology: there is no goal, no closure and no finality in his thesis. He may write, he may even publish, but shape, direction, vitality organic to ‘life-view’ are lacking. This type of writer is impressionistic. Fluctuating in intent, he has no ‘Archimedean point’ (*BOA* 160) or ground of cognitive fixity from which to know himself and to know the world and from which to conclude; he can only *end*, arbitrarily and unaware of his limitation. His running temptation is bombast, of one kind or another, and he is outwardly directed to please a public and is thereby captive to the aesthetic avoidance of a truly passionate engagement or concern. His is the scribbling version of Kierkegaard’s ‘talkativeness’, the overlay of speech that is ‘afraid of the silence which reveals its emptiness’.¹⁴ Whereas, rightly understood: ‘Silence is inward deepening and the road by which an originality is gained that is more than a substitute for the originality of genius.’ (*BOA* 280)

But the ‘essential’ author possesses that which is lacking in his opposite. He is inwardly and not outwardly directed. He has a life-view intrinsic to his authorship and he has striven both for self-knowledge and for true knowledge of his subject, commencing to write only after that preparatory process and then doing so out of deep impulse, either to share what is of value that he has personally apprehended or to assist in the attainment of an ethical goal. The essential author has unwavering purpose and conclusion in view. His work is intrinsically upbuilding and re-creative whereas that of the premise-author is destructive, negative, ‘devouring’.

¹² Like Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley*, *BOA* was produced in three integral versions, one by Petrus Minor, two under his own name - but Kierkegaard also produced a further two partial versions. ‘The Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle’ was originally an addendum to the third version, subsequently published under the pseudonym HH as the second of *Two Ethical-Religious Essays*, in 1849. In their 1998 definitive English edition, the Hongs wrote that these “numerous revisions [...] make the Adler manuscript unique in the authorship because the long process of writing and revising is manifest in great detail.” (*BOA* xvii)

¹³ See earlier discussion in this chapter.

¹⁴ *PA* 79, *T.4* 98. See also my chapter four, section two.

In his prolonged scrutiny of the revelatory claims of Magister Adolph Adler, Kierkegaard found his subject to be eccentrically confused about their content and communication. There was inconsistency and even un-reconciled conflict between the visionary content-claims. As well as this incoherence there was no novelty of insight, no unveiling of what was previously unknown to the Christian tradition. The observed character of the mentally confused Adler, who was known personally to Kierkegaard¹⁵, did not appear to meet traditional churchly criteria of discernment and assessment of his claims through received and recognised criteria of sanctity, appropriate learning, personal integration, or maturity. (*BOA* 115-6) Most decisively of all, his willingness to alter and ultimately retract his "revelation" under pressure from the church authorities, above whose authority he had presumed himself to be, classified Adler in 'his dialectical ambivalence' (*BOA* 19) and his 'apostolic' wavering, (my ironic phrase) as a *premise* author. There was no steady purpose and conclusion in view, summoning him from beyond himself, even though he may have been, as Kierkegaard conceded, a (deranged) genius and the recipient of some moving religious experiences. He was no *apostle* and his message, finally, was a disposable option, rather than a divine *fiat* about which he could not be silent. Robert C. Roberts (Roberts 1995:147-8) has read Kierkegaard's approach here effectively through Wittgenstein's concern to elucidate the 'grammar of the *concepts* that are conveyed by the words' (Roberts 1995:145), what amounts to their function in life. Hence, for Kierkegaard, Adler had:

... shifted the sphere of the paradoxical-religious back into the aesthetic and thereby [...] achieved the result that every Christian term, which by remaining in its sphere is a qualitative category, can now, in a reduced state, serve as a brilliant expression that means all sorts of things. (*BOA* 173)

A notable Hegelian both in scholarship and conviction, Adler subsequently burnt his works of that persuasion and went on to produce a literary output of four books with no mention of revelation and much talk of 'genius', implicitly claimed for himself. (*BOA* 132) SK's view of such clear evidence of inward vacillation has been expressed in a very different work that appeared on March 13th 1847, from within the period of his preoccupation with Adler's case and when he was also personally embroiled in the life- and spirit-threatening controversy of the *Corsair* affair¹⁶, something that further refined his grasp of what is required in being a 'Single - or Solitary - Individual':

Shall a man in truth will one thing, then this one thing that he wills must be such that it remains unaltered in all changes, so that by willing it he can win immutability. If it changes continually, then he himself becomes changeable, double-minded and unstable. And this continual change is nothing else than impurity. (*POH* 53)

¹⁵ Adler had envisaged that Kierkegaard might be forerunner to his proclamation in the manner of a John the Baptist, something that amused SK as a 'perfectly respectable' prospect in view of his own lack of messianic ambitions. (Hannay 2001: 368)

¹⁶ See Perkins in Perkins (ed.) 1990: xiv-xxiv and Jansen in Perkins (1990: 2-4). See also *EK* 269 for corroboration and for the Hongs' variation of title in translation. In common with others I still prefer Steere's formulation that captures a distinctive emphasis. Bauckham (1999: 165-9) is an important supporter of this view, situating SK's writing in the NT Letter of James (his favourite book in scripture).

Consistency of endeavour and intent are major virtues and determinants in Kierkegaard¹⁷ and he understood himself to be both a genius and a self-focused author in this way but he always disclaimed apostolic status. (*BOA* 311, 313) The pairs of categories must not be confused and Adler emerges in Kierkegaard's explication as a premise author possessed of genius but with an *appropriately* refuted claim to apostolicity. This refutation could never by the nature of the case be *finally* decisive, however. As George Steiner memorably wrote: 'the demolition of Adler is flawed.' (Steiner in Reé and Chamberlain 1998:112) It was and is far from easy to go about such things.

It had to be so: notwithstanding resources on other fronts. Kierkegaard has his own post-Cartesian and contra-Hegelian dialectic, an opposed slant on 'systematic doubt'. Whether philosophy in its *essence* begins 'in doubt' or whether, historically, only *modern* philosophy begins in doubt is the issue humorously debated in the incomplete novella *Johannes Climacus*. (*JC* 136-7) Because modern philosophy is an unconcluded process the issue of its premise as merely historical rather than necessary (in which case a 'severance' with the past must have occurred) cannot be established. Faced with the excruciating demands of engagement here (*JC* 140-1) Climacus the impressionable epistemological explorer *faints*. This loss of consciousness under felt aporetic pressure is followed by an apprehensive and unwonted reengagement with the idea as Climacus focuses on the impossible impasse of a Shakespearian 'future in the instant', that would 'drive a person to madness', finishing the world. (I cite *Macbeth* deliberately.). It is enunciated as a variety of eschatological moment, 'in and out of time', but it is couched philosophically and attributed as *philosophy's* hubristic goal:

Philosophy [...] wanted to do something even more difficult: it wanted to permeate everything with the thought of eternity and necessity, wanted to do this in the present moment, which would mean slaying the present with the thought of eternity and yet preserving its fresh life. It would mean wanting to see what is happening as that which has happened and simultaneously as that which is happening; it would mean wanting to know the future as a present and yet simultaneously as a future. (*JC* 142-3)

This is the fundamental Cartesian/Kantian/Hegelian project under ironic attack through a theoretical formulation of apocalyptic unveiling, something that Kierkegaard is exposing as much more difficult than the 'precarious', if humanly more humble, matter of *prophecy*, here considered by Climacus but not pursued. This type of philosophical project proceeds for Kierkegaard from a detected and decisive category error, that '... in Hegel, *faith is elevated to reason* in the context of the system, and it wears a certain logical necessity.' (Hendry 1982:14, italics mine) Descartes and the ensuing rationalist tradition inaugurated that process but Kierkegaard, Hegel's 'antipodal disciple', (Hendry 1982:14) saw that faith required a necessary element of reciprocal discernment and discrimination by the human subject that had the effect of intensifying its freedom. He gave *Johannes Climacus* a

¹⁷ See Malantschuk (1971: 167): "From the very beginning of his authorship Kierkegaard practises in his dialectic this tightening of reflection with 'the idea of consistency', and in this way his dialectic has an indissoluble connection with the concept of consistency." This is a quality of the essential author who "is continually striving, but within a totality, not toward the totality." (*BOA* 13)

superscript and subscript from Spinoza, but these are overruled, counter-stated and privileged by the ‘meaning’ of the title itself, its pseudonymous biographical subject, the ‘author’ to whom *Philosophical Investigations* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* are later attributed. His name is that of a pioneering hesychiastic desert father of sixth century eastern Christian monasticism. *Climax* is Greek for ‘ladder’ and the historical John Climacus wrote *The Ladder of Divine Ascent, scala paradisi*. ‘He developed the notion of *hesychia*, inner silence and solitary prayer, versus *polylogia*, talkative prayer.’ (Rose 1992:28. See also *JC* ix, footnote 2)

Kierkegaard thus conflates and ironically contrasts, through word play and confusion of registers, two methods of cognition:

Hegel is a *Johannes Climacus* who does not storm the heavens as do the giants – by setting mountain upon mountain – but *climbs* up to them by means of his syllogisms. (*JC* 231)

Whereas by noteworthy contrast the pseudonym resumes his tentative cognitive enquiry after what could be the refreshment following a suspension of consciousness (*JC* 140-1) or even the tapping into a deeper *level* of consciousness and possibility of knowing. Kierkegaard here pushes the boundaries of the spiritual quest – humorously - towards its contemplative core and as he does this he parallels and contrasts ironically the *hubris* of the nakedly philosophical assertion.

Davies (2001:250.) writes: ‘... the silence of God was the source or inspiration for Hesychasm.’ Vardy (2003:149) recalls an exchange between the American philosopher, William James, and a theology student: ‘Philosophy is like a blind man in a dark cellar, looking for a black cat which isn’t there.’ Vardy observes astutely that the truth claim within the anecdote is only that the evidence for the existence of the cat is *ambiguous*. Its substance tilts sharply at the concerns that Kierkegaard was seeking to illumine here and which he had recognised for some time. An 1835 *Journal* entry shows him clearly recognising an incompatibility between Christianity and philosophy, at a time when he was still keeping a firm distance from the former.¹⁸

But in the live and paradigmatic case of Adler, Kierkegaard had to engage with a purported, rather loquacious *prophet* who had wilfully forsaken the sources of the orthodox dialectical idiom. Here his requisite tools of critique and of discernment were the same as those that propelled, but negatively and behind the scenes, the ironic and pseudonymous literary-dialectical attack that we have just surveyed. Pierre Macherey’s important insights into inexpressible yet evident textually mediated conflict have more bite when applied to SK’s written assessments of Adler than to his earlier philosophical novella. Macherey wrote:

Thus the work cannot speak of the more or less complex opposition which structures it; through its expression and its embodiment. In its every particle, the work *manifests*, uncovers, what it cannot say. This silence gives it life. (Macherey 1966:84)

¹⁸ See Connell (1985: 42), Lowrie (1970: 87-9) and Vardy (2003:138).

Kierkegaard was an unusually self-aware writer, consciously alert to the direction and implications of his processes. The references to *Johannes Climacus* above demonstrate this. But the critique of Adler's case – a living subject – was a much harder business to undertake (*pace* the earlier text) than any ironic philosophical narrative. Here dialectic itself becomes aporetic because Kierkegaard himself laboured under a presumed given task from 'Governance' and Adler was thus, like Hegel, antipodal yet very close. They might even be twinned in the public eye.¹⁹ Steiner's concluding comment on this concern is exaggeratedly but perceptively accurate, making Macherey's general theoretical point but here within the constraints of a specified authorial context:

On almost every page of the Adler book, we observe Kierkegaard labouring, sometimes with satiric confidence, but more often in barely muffled *Angst*, to shake off the intimacy of his scandalous familiar, of the 'house-demon' who is also his twin. A particular terror emanates from these pages.
(Steiner 1998: 113)

Pressing issues of truth, certainty, authority, and the grounds, if any, for ultimate appeal about these are here present in Kierkegaard's concerns. As Christian apologist and disputant he must utilize modernity's tools, in a common and often inhospitable market place, to locate the criteria for judging those issues that referred to these matters of abiding consequence and that were so tellingly brought to light by the object of his critique here.

There is a multi-layered critical approach within the text(s) of *The Book on Adler*. These are essentially and cumulatively interwoven and integrated but it is helpful to disinter three of these layers and certainly useful for my purposes here. There is firstly a *literary-critical* approach, setting boundaries and refining category- and stage-distinctions. Adler is a premise-author with one uniquely distinctive premise only, ironically denoted by Kierkegaard as a 'revelation-fact'. (*BOA* 18) If this description were *straight* (non-ironic) Adler would, of course, be an *essential* author. But his 'fact' mutates into Gnostic surmise, offensive counsel speciously defended, opinion and revisionary purpose that becomes virtually revocable under institutional pressure. (*BOA* 338; 344-7; 99, 347-8)

... by not understanding himself in it, [he] changes that fact into a premise, into a miscellaneous announcement, into an inexplicable something about which one futilely seeks information from him. (*BOA* 18)

A misplaced critical response in the *aesthetic* category to writing of such purported claims, if they are true, is a mere dabbler's notion. *Essential* criticism in seeking 'explanation and understanding' in 'unswerving faithfulness' of that claim is summoned, in Kierkegaard's scheme, into ethico-religious spheres forbidden to aesthetics unless the claim is found to be flawed and the writing can be aesthetically demonstrated to be that of a premise-author only. Otherwise, we might observe, perhaps crudely, that the class of vehicle is inadequate for the terrain to be traversed. In a time, like SK's and later, when religious categories (and others) have con-fused,

¹⁹ SK might be associated with Adler's type of instability particularly in view of *The Corsair* affair. He might be attacking Adler in order to privilege revelations of his own. Additionally, how could he be sure of the integrity of inspiration behind his own work? (Hannay 2001: 368)

become levelled, homogenous and contemporised, attention-seeking claims conflating *vox populi* and *vox dei* will inevitably be made, confusing the spirit of the age with Holy Spirit and wishing to have the improbable status of serving both at one time. (BOA 24-5)

Then there is a seriously biographical *ad hominem* approach.²⁰ For Kierkegaard, in this his *psychological* critique, academic achievement, intellectual fashion and, above all a basic lack of *formation* have served to obscure the essential for Adler so that his actual purchase on his adoptive pastoral calling is seriously flawed. He is disjunctive to the task that he faces in actuality. These considerations ‘prepare for the crisis’ and ‘provide some presuppositions by which the crisis in Adler’s life *could* be made psychologically understandable.’ (BOA 91) Such a one, intellectually precocious, spiritually volatile, isolated, incommunicado and self-confessedly scripturally sub-literate, (BOA 339) is, for SK, clearly prone to the misconstruing of a wonted revelatory experience. An interesting biographical convergence is that Adler’s higher degree dissertation (written in Danish and not Latin, exceptionally, like Kierkegaard’s) was on the theme of ‘isolated subjectivity’. There is a double irony here in relation to Adler’s and to Kierkegaard’s eventual fate and also to some of the most insistent concerns in Kierkegaard’s thought that press on him so personally here.

In a particularly astringent and tight passage of close argumentation climaxing in irony, Kierkegaard pinpoints the essence of his critique of Adler here:

... he confuses the subjective with the objective, his altered subjective state with an external event, the dawning of a light upon him with the coming into existence of something new outside him, the falling of the veil before his eyes with his having had a revelation. Subjectively his emotion is carried to the extreme; he wants to select the most powerful expression to describe it and by means of a mental deception grasps the objective qualification: having had a revelation [...] If the essentially Christian enters into the hearts of ever so many believers, every believer realises that it did not arise in his heart, realises that the objective qualification of the essentially Christian is not a reminiscence as erotic love is of falling in love. (BOA 117-18)

Strategies of Kierkegaardian exploratory rhetoric merit comment here. The New Testament intertextual echoes present are numerous and they are predominantly and notably Pauline ones from the Acts narratives and from the Corinthian and Galatian letters. I cite particularly 2 Corinthians 3.14, in ironic juxtaposition to point up Adler’s confusion, with Acts 9.18, 2 Corinthians 12.1-7 and Galatians 1.12.²¹ This passage represents a moment of strenuously attained, complex and asserted perceptual clarity in Kierkegaard, about which the theologian David Gouwens has justly observed:

No clearer statement of the ‘objectivity’ of Kierkegaard’s own understanding of ‘transcendence’ and ‘revelation’ in Christian faith, including the priority of Christ’s work apart from its reception, could be found. The narrative of Christ

²⁰ Serious because Kierkegaard had a double concern not to injure the damaged Adler further and not for his readers to be inappropriately side-tracked by a perceived ‘cock-fight between Adler and me’. (BOA xiii-xiv)

²¹ Also within this passage are Matthew 4.16; 2 Corinthians 3.14; 1 Corinthians 2.9; Galatians 4.6.

extra nos is logically prior in Kierkegaard's vision of Christian faith. (Gouwens 1996:148)

All of which leads to the doctrinal/institutional aspect of Kierkegaard's attack, the subject of which we may characterise as that of Adler as office-holder in the state church. For Kierkegaard in his *dialectical* critique, added in the third and fourth versions of his final text, Magister Adler, as an *extraordinary* in the established order, should display a willing transparency of life before and within that order. He should 'desire opposition' so that his integrity and motivation should, as far as possible, be manifest to all. Again the Pauline apostolic template is present and here it refracts an at times almost-Christological structure in the following remarkable and characteristic passage:

... the true extraordinary [...] is the most nonchalant person about that temporal concern of the worldly heroes, whether what he has to proclaim will be victorious in the world. On the other hand, a poor sinner he is anxious, is overwhelmed every time he considers his responsibility and whether he in any way could have been mistaken; indeed the weight of responsibility can rest on him so heavily that it seems as if he would stop breathing. For that very reason he desires opposition: he – the weak one, he – the strong one, who, although a solitary human being, κατὰ δύναμιν is stronger in his weakness than the united might of the established order, which naturally has the power both to flog him and to execute him as if it were nothing at all. When berserk fury came upon our northern fathers, they had themselves constrained between shields; in the same way the true extraordinary also desires that the power of the established order will form appropriate opposition. (*BOA* 155)

See, intertextually, for the first sentence Paul's rhetorical onslaught in 1 Corinthians 4.8-13; for the second 1 Corinthians 2.3, 2 Corinthians 11.28, 2 Corinthians 1.8-9; for the third 2 Corinthians 11.29, 2 Corinthians 12.9-10, Mark 14.15, John 19.10-11, Colossians 2.14b-15. The fourth and final sentence cited, typical of SK's tonal turns in rhetoric, gives a characteristically comic analogy, farcically disproportionate but also serving covertly to re-introduce the focus on and remedy for enthusiastic imbalance and excess. The surprising liberation of the humour facilitates, even releases, the response of the reader to what is, in effect, a complex, integrated homiletic appeal. In this connection the key insight of a pioneering work of scholarship is vindicated:

It is safe to assert that the Scriptures exerted a more continuous, a more creative, a more profound constraint upon his nimble thoughts, than did any other book or any comparable group of books [...] In short, no area of S.K.'s life or work was exempt from the repeated impact of that Scripture through which God had chosen to speak to him.

(Minear and Morimoto 1953: 19, cited by Eller: 1968: 1)

In fact, in continuity with the classic tradition of the ancient Church Fathers, East and West, Kierkegaard indwelt the scriptural worlds of discourse, listened carefully, discriminatingly and faithfully to their multiple voices, and allowed himself, worldview and life, to be shaped by their perspective. Alert to and only guardedly

respectful of biblical scholarship,²² he nevertheless went deeper into the praxis of early tradition, treating scripture as the primary indivisible source for the categories and, still more, the grasping of the experience of the Christian faith in direct address. He possessed a presciently modern consciousness, but

... rather than adapting the biblical world to modernity, Kierkegaard [nevertheless and uncharacteristically, for a modern] allowed himself to be shaped by the biblical world. (Gouwens 1996: 23-4, interpolation mine)

The unfolding spirit of the whole of his authorship cannot be grasped without these twin foundational perspectives.

Bauckham (1999: 160-1), in a work of biblical scholarship and exposition that explicitly takes SK as a hermeneutical cipher, writes about Kierkegaard with a much wider application than that to the Letter of James, SK's favourite scriptural book, which is his contextually immediate concern:

... few theologians have lived more intensively their own religious thought [...] Clearly the influence [of James] was at a deeper level than can be seen merely on the surface of his writings [...] Kierkegaard was not an exegete, at least in the modern sense. He makes his contribution at a stage of interpretation and appropriation of the biblical texts which lies beyond the historical exegesis practised by modern commentators. It makes no sense to ask where his reading of James [here read *scripture*] ends and his own creative thinking begins. But this is the way biblical texts have always had their creative effects both in the thought of the great Christian theologians and also in the lives of the exemplary followers of Christ, known and unknown, who have lived creatively the texts they loved [...] Kierkegaard's biblical interpretation [is] inseparably a part of his own highly creative thinking ...

Eller (1968) went further. I do not agree with his wider thesis in identifying Kierkegaard with the beliefs and understanding of pietistic groups and cultures of societal withdrawal, like the Brethren. Kierkegaard indwelt the Lutheran tradition and knew his roots, albeit critically. His biblical apologetic needs also to be viewed within a central Reformation stream of 'credally and historically mediated doctrine ... [in contrast to] ... some of the Anabaptists who appeared to them [the Reformers] to be guilty of what we might now call a romantic attempt to begin with a clean sheet.' (Gunton 2000: 37) The broader term 'Protestant Radicalism' (Durnbaugh 1998: 211) is a designation in which Luther, Kierkegaard and, say, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who studied SK (see Thiselton 1995), may be securely placed. But these were each consciously men of their times, discerning and meeting their challenges, as they understood them, from within a fully realised and personally risky context and in critical dialogue with their formative traditions. In the case of Kierkegaard, Pattison (2002) demonstrates this effectively through a fascinating variety of contemporary

²² Bauckham (1999: 1-7) discusses, with generous polemical citations, the weighting of Kierkegaard's views on this matter. By contrast the young Lawrence used his contemporary reading in biblical criticism to help in his emancipation from such overt Christian claims as he knew and his later critical reading in order to return creatively and idiosyncratically to a form of scriptural exegesis at the end of his life. See Wright (2000: 21-35 and 228-232).

cultural reference. With this important *caveat* I can accept the main thrust of Eller's still somewhat over-stated contention that:

In the first place, S.K. was very insistent that the New Testament constitutes the norm and definition of Christianity. Not the creeds, catechisms, or symbols; not the tradition of the church; not the theological formulations of either the past or the present; not personal experience or one's own understanding of existence; not the demands of the age; but the New Testament is *the* norm and definition. In the *Attack*, the phrase S.K. used as a technical term to denote the ideal and goal for which he strove was "the Christianity of *the New Testament*." (Eller 1968)

2. Contrasting analogies: Newman and Auden.

But how startling a claim is Eller's really, when stripped down, and viewed within more mainstream living traditions of orthodox belief? Consideration of two different cases, religious and aesthetic, will develop this point. Kierkegaard's brief life was encompassed by that of the English churchman and Roman Catholic convert, John Henry Newman (1801-90). They had no contact and almost certainly no awareness of each other but one commentator (Richardson 1961:50) speaks for the general direction of emphasis of others in describing them as 'the two most sensitively religious minds of the nineteenth century'.²³ The obvious *contrasts* are the most striking although both men possessed literary gifts of a very high order, the one seeking a costly solution to the challenges of his time in a discipleship outworked in Singleness, the other in submission, however nuanced - qualified, even - to the Papal *magisterium*.²⁴ Both contemporaries were to a punitive degree self-exiled through these choices, singing the Lord's song in their own lands made strange. The Englishman shared with the Dane a sensibility of inwardness, profoundly influenced by the Romantics, but without the defining sense of the assumed communicative powers and felt impact of nature, whether as Wordsworthian address or as Keatsian impact. In this the contrast with D.H. Lawrence appears to be absolute, with T.S. Eliot, for whom physicality could often bespeak alienation, if not pain, occupying the phenomenological centre-space. Kierkegaard [like] 'Newman, we might say, preserved the distinctive emotional range of early nineteenth-century Romanticism, from awe to tenderness, but displaced from its customary stimuli of the experience of

²³ Of course, such generalisations have only limited value. For a more pondered, more theological and less empathic comparison see John Macquarrie, 'Newman and Kierkegaard on the Act of Faith'. (Ker 1997: 75-88) Macquarrie elsewhere (Macquarrie 1990: 244) demonstrates a professional historical theologian's respect for and puzzlement at the unsystematic Dane as a brilliant 'gadfly'. He is excellent on the contextualised presumed theological meanings and their consequences but he is uneasy with the multiple manner of their communication. The latter – ultimately – vitiates his grasp of final impact and significance, and may account for his docetic suspicions (1990: 241-2) and for his Nestorian misgivings (1997:79-81), both of which are valid risks attendant on SK's authorial strategy and polemical requirement. For a more judicious and accurate assessment of the real nature of Kierkegaard's always-contextualised theological contribution and the strenuous reader-engagement that is thus required, see Mackinnon (1968: 122-128).

²⁴ Hans Ur Von Balthasar, in his *Theological Aesthetics*, linked both men in their apostolicity with Blaise Pascal, as called to speak not only existentially but also objectively. (Cited by Nichols in Ker 1997: 104-5) This is a different order of comment to that of Macquarrie, albeit by one who is, at least, a theological peer. Eliot, in some ways surprisingly for his prose-idiom *persona*, privileged Pascal over Newman as a 'religious writer pertinent for our time (*IP* 154)'.

physical nature.’ (Nichols in Ker 1997: 104) We shall have reason to return to these discriminations.

Newman also was a ‘radical disciple’, though not in any sense that Eller might recognise, with the presenting concerns in his biography seemingly accentuated on ecclesiology, the point where Kierkegaard’s theological positive emphasis is often most weak, if not absent.²⁵ Newman’s Anglican friend and disciple, Dean Richard Church (1815-90), published an article, ‘Cardinal Newman’s Course’ in the *Guardian*, a year after his death, in which he described the ‘ultimate key’ to Newman’s faith journey as a ‘keen and profound’ sense of and commitment to New Testament life, community and motivation, from which he read an incisive critique of national secular and religious life. Here is revealed the most direct link with SK. A.M. Allchin makes reference to ‘the similar position of Kierkegaard, who, at least in his starting-points has much in common with Newman.’ (Allchin in Coulson, Allchin, Trevor 1965: 103-4) They ended very differently, of course.

Before we consider D.H. Lawrence in differentiated comparison, there is one more related issue to be outlined. The broadly Arnoldian approach, attacked by Eliot explicitly and sometimes superciliously (*SE* 137-8, 396, *ASG* and much else) and profoundly and wittily critiqued by Kierkegaard (see especially *POV* 477 in *EK*), that literature is, has to or *should be* our modern substitute/resource for religion has had continuing advocates and explorers.²⁶ It was in his *Book on Adler* that Kierkegaard had necessarily to engage with the cognate theme that so concerned many later literary modernists: what is the writer’s *authority* for his task? Outside any informing shared tradition,²⁷ in the *anomie* of modernity, for whom does he write and on what grounds? To a premise author the issue does not occur – he finds his public – but the essential author can neither evade it nor avoid consideration of the cost of it all. W.B. Yeats, ‘last romantic’ poet both of aesthetic masks *and* of the ‘foul rag-and-bone shop of the [‘unchristened’] heart’, expressed the crux succinctly, in terms that SK himself would no doubt recognise:

The intellect of man is forced to choose
Perfection of the life, or of the work,
And if it take the second must refuse
A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.²⁸

²⁵ ‘Barth has rightly pointed out that one of the weaknesses of Kierkegaard’s theology is its lack of an ecclesiology.’ (Gunton 2000: 73) The question as to whether Kierkegaard would have become Roman Catholic given the access and opportunity has also been raised. See, e.g., Lowrie (1970: 220-221), who has outlined biographical and theological issues. However I feel that usually the presenting openness behind such de-contextualised speculation is hollow.

²⁶ Amongst others I note Rorty (2000) who sees literature as the (continuing) summit beyond religion, philosophy, and science, much as earlier intellectuals like Frazer privileged science as the revelatory peak beyond religion and philosophy. (Incidentally, Hegel’s privileging of philosophy is dismissed by Rorty with the aid of Kierkegaard!) Behind such views there is a distinguished and varied 20th century critical tradition and debate embracing Leavis, Trilling, Heller and Josipovici, deriving from the Victorian ‘sage’ traditions and the Romantic Movement more generally.

²⁷ SK recognised his lack of accredited *religious* authority, sometimes painfully. (Hannay 2001: 366-7) His position is obviously analogous to that of later writers in the still more secular modernity of the next century and its successor.

²⁸ ‘The Choice’ (Yeats 1961: 278-9). Self-confessedly ‘very religious’, Yeats (1966: 115-6), like and unlike William Blake, rejected a fashionable scepticism and carved out a strikingly human rhetorical/poetic utterance from his frequenting of the diverse territories of the esoteric, the aesthete,

Gabriel Josipovici, in a sympathetic and wide-ranging consideration of 'Kierkegaard and the Novel', (Josipovici 1998:114-128) argued that SK's finally defined position lies across that aesthetic transitional divide in that 'Kierkegaard's personal tragedy lay in the fact that he was not enough of a writer to take pleasure in the writing process itself, but too much of one ever to be a Knight of Faith.' (Josipovici 1998: 128) But *fact* in criticism is always a disputable term and, allowing and illuminating as much as he does, Josipovici nevertheless rejects - or fails to consider - the awareness that there have been times and examples where such terms, 'writer' and 'knight of faith', were not *prima facie* antipathetic²⁹ and that there may be some possible/probable kinship of Kierkegaard with those times and examples. Even if the times may be unpropitious, this does not preclude impact or accuracy. It is intrinsic to Kierkegaard's religious belief - and not merely a pre-modernist prescient moment - that, in a later seminal work, he put into the mouth of Climacus words applicable to the essential author (but here denoted as the 'subjective existing thinker') who seeks to convey the real:

He is cognizant of the negativity of the infinite in existence; he always keeps open the wound of negativity, which at times is a saving factor (the others let the wound close and become positive - deceived); in his communication, he expresses the same thing. (*CUP* 85)

It has also been argued that in secular modernity the serious artist may assume or be granted what constitutes an *apostolic* status and this is because that category in itself has now become meaningless, or, as Stanley Cavell writes, 'forgotten, inapplicable'.³⁰ For Cavell, although the fully associative terminology is defunct, something of a quasi-apostolic function still persists and crosses the division of categories that Kierkegaard endeavoured so firmly to propose. Persisting features include an elective pressure to communicate a message, a period of silent incubation before the message is proclaimed, self-authentication through the work without external claim to authority and response to a call with no given social context from which to exercise this. Both Cavell *and* Josipovici highlight with some precision, in their differing ways, what is too often a less clearly reflected but still utilised perception. But as Walsh (1994:192) states in critique of Cavell, the apparent lack of apostles in modernity should not lead us to the fundamental error that the serious essential artist can be a substitute and thus an apostle incognito. Kierkegaard refuted that confusion and so should we. Perhaps too he comes close to crossing that categorical border.

Obviously not on the border but my second contrasting aesthetic case, W.H. Auden, is instructive if we consider the development of his attitudes both to Lawrence and to Kierkegaard. He gave both titles, 'Genius' and 'Apostle', to D.H. Lawrence *and*

the folk and the political and public. If he could be said to have made a poetic *confessio fidei* it must be in the complex dialectical argument of 'Vacillation' (Yeats 1961:282-6) in the penultimate sentence of which he finally aligns himself with the Homeric against the Catholic-mystical, exemplified in Baron Von Hügel.

²⁹ We have considered Newman. St Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther are also obvious examples amongst countless others. SK's visual *presentation* of the contemporary Knight of Faith in *FT* 38-41, as a 'marvel [that] can so easily deceive', undermines a romanticising of the religious at the comic expense of the bathos and aestheticisation of the mundane. Iris Murdoch's comments on this are exemplary. (Murdoch 1993: 124-7)

³⁰ The words are from Stanley Cavell writing on 'Kierkegaard's *Authority and Revelation*'. [i.e. *Book on Adler*]. See Thompson (ed.) (1972: 391-2).

accepted a version of the Kierkegaardian distinction. In Chapter Two, I described Lawrence as ‘apostolic’, taking the designation from Auden, influenced as he was by Kierkegaard.³¹ (Auden 1956: 123) Auden’s essay on Lawrence privileges messenger over maker because without belief or code human life is not possible. The beliefs of an artist must be derived and Auden takes the example of Dante, who ‘we read for his poetry not for his theology because we have already met the theology elsewhere.’ (This is a strongly Eliotic note and then as now a somewhat presumptive judgement in a culture of increasing theological illiteracy or amnesia. See *SE* 138.) Earlier captivated by Kierkegaard, the later Auden continued to ponder and learn from him but also came to reject what he saw as the singularity of some of his views and prejudices. It was the same with the more guarded attitude that he came to adopt to Lawrence, who was intrinsically such a different ‘kind of poet’.³² A fixed stance for Auden, however, was his rejection of any Shelley-like epistemological privileging of poetry. For him (Auden 1966: 142), writing in memory of Yeats, ‘poetry makes nothing happen’ and in this he was consciously anti-Romantic, still genuinely Kierkegaardian, (apparently) close to Eliot and in opposition to Lawrence: Citizen over Pilgrim in Bahkle’s (1991) denotation. Jacobs makes a claim more obviously applicable to the later Auden who:

... consistently repudiated the notion that poetry has any privileged access to truth, any especially sanctified role to play. Poetry was certainly his vocation, and he loved it. As Mendelson writes, “Vocation, for Auden, is the most innocent form of love, a voluntary loss of self in an object.” He knew he would be wrong not to love his work, not to achieve what he called “that eye-on-the-object look” characteristic of people who are “forgetting themselves in a function.” But he would never claim that his calling was superior to any other. In this sense he was purely Lutheran, emphasizing the dignity of every calling before God. It is not surprising that he wrote a poem based on the medieval legend of *le jong leur de Dieu*, the poor “clown of God” who can offer nothing to the Christ Child but his juggling—and whose offering is received, not because it has special value, but because he gave what he had to give. (Jacobs 2001: 9-10)

Auden’s suggestive use of the term ‘apostolic’ for Lawrence cannot then be taken with undue precision, additionally because the original context was that of an early reading and encounter. (Auden 1956:124) But Josipovici’s distinctive description, which I dispute, of Kierkegaard, thus *does* becomes a valid one for Auden the writer, modified and minus the *angst*. He was happy with his writing, had no sense of authorial superiority and clearly knew himself not to be a Knight of Faith. (Josipovici 1998:128) This is the contrasting illustration that Auden’s case provides: closer to Eliot in the end, than to Lawrence or to Kierkegaard, but with more qualifications still to be made.

³¹ Auden’s selection ‘*The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard* by Søren Kierkegaard’ first appeared in 1952. It is currently (Auden 2000) published by New York Review Books Classics. Five years before that, in 1947, he had published *The Age of Anxiety*, the title of which denotes a clear homage and influence and SK is implicitly present throughout the tenor of the earlier *New Year Letter* (1941), and explicitly so (Auden 1968: 118) at one point.

³² See Jacobs (2001: 6) for Kierkegaard and Bahkle in Cushman and Jackson (1991:211-227) for Lawrence.

He gave what he had to give. Lawrence, very different as man and as poet, did not see himself or his art like this (he 'had' so much more although he too could only do the same) and Auden on Lawrence is perhaps only occasionally illuminating of its subject for this reason. This excursus affords exemplary highlighting of Kierkegaardian differentiations in actual lives and works. I turn now to the more complex and central investigation of Lawrence's case.

3. Lawrence's Self Understanding.

By his last published work Lawrence's view on some of the matters that we have been considering seems to have become quite clear, at least in his own terms:

But to my mind the essential feeling in all art is religious, and art is a form of religion without dogma. The *feeling* in art is religious always. Whenever the soul is moved to a certain fullness of experience, that is religion. (*A* 155)

The possibly Arnoldian echo is at best indirect³³ but Lawrence's beliefs were also in part derived. He was both maker and messenger but the messages had their sources, noted, as they must. There can be no *tabula rasa* or vacuum in these matters even as Lawrence made his own and took further what he received.

The formative background of intellectual and sceptical influence in Lawrence's development has been much canvassed.³⁴ Equal emphases should be given to the attendant development of his thought in relation to evolving circumstances and to the reception of his writings, with which he was always in often-disputatious dialogue. We find Biblical intertextuality to be present both in *The Rainbow* and in *Women In Love*. Images of apocalyptic and of resurrection usher in the hope that concludes the earlier book, following the contours of an increasing consciousness of modernity through a differentiated historical context across three generations proceeding from an evoked and sometimes near-idyllic depiction of agrarian rhythm, courtship and rite of passage.³⁵ (*R* 9-13, *R* 115-119, *R* 124-133) The intended sequel fiction, a more fractured and consistently modernist expression, is composed throughout in crisis-apocalyptic mode with the Great War and the attendant dissolution of chronicle and meaning in western society, as background³⁶ and theme respectively. The period of his final revision of *The Rainbow* had coincided with Lawrence's personally complex and decisive revulsion from Bloomsbury sexual mores and his disturbed insight into the psychic bellicosity informing both war and anti-war protagonists. He did not –

³³ Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* was published in 1883. To my knowledge he has never been posited as a direct influence on Lawrence. For a discussion of Eliot's critique of Lawrence in the light of his critique of Arnold see Montgomery (1994: 225-227). For incisive comment on Arnold, contemporary criticism of the Bible, spiritual values and religious truth, see Bell (1988: 17) and, still more, Prickett (1986: 63-5, 189-94).

³⁴ See the appropriate summary sections in Schneider (1986), Worthen (1991) and Wright (2000) for recent accurate résumé.

³⁵ This is part of Lawrence's deliberate intention. He looks back from a vantage point of modernity, a perspective without which a novel such as *The Rainbow* would not be possible. Kinkead-Weekes (1989) offers a detailed and convincing reading of the creative interplay between history and archetype in *The Rainbow*.

³⁶ Holderness (1982: 199): 'The war is not only, as has often been recognised, the historical context of *Women In Love*, but its unspoken subject.' His illuminating but flawed reading of 'primary absence' – he underestimates the complexity of the sources of Lawrence's insight – is more briefly summarised in Holderness (1986: 126-8).

could not because the internal pressure of them was too great - withdraw from the urgency or the consequences of these insights and they served to qualify, though not to eradicate, his till-now apparently dominant perspective of Nietzschean libertarianism.³⁷ It is the implicit (if not explicit) conclusion of Paul Delaney's study of Lawrence in this period that Lawrence 'read' the depth of the tragedy of World War One contemporaneously and at a pitch of meaningful awareness that was in essence prophetic and beyond that of his peers and associates. (See Delaney 1979 *passim*.)

In the summer of 1915, in the aftermath of the finally completed composition of *The Rainbow*,³⁸ Bertrand Russell, with whom Lawrence was now disagreeing deeply over the underlying political and religious assumptions behind their abortive joint anti-war effort,³⁹ lent him John Burnett's *Early Greek Philosophy* (1892), thus introducing him to the Pre-Socratic cosmologists who complemented and enlarged his current understanding of models of fundamental reality and offered a seemingly viable Hellenic counterpart (amongst others) to his fragmenting northern European Judeo-Christian perspective and formation. His engagement with the apparently remote cosmological world behind this book inspired and helped to facilitate a fresh exploratory vocabulary and conceptual schema for Lawrence. In his biographical volume, Kinkead-Weekes (1996: 245-50) effectively analyses this encounter, one which had far-reaching consequences for Lawrence's expressive art through to the end of his life.⁴⁰ By the early summer of 1916, almost a year later, Lawrence had become 'convinced now that Christianity was played out ...', through a combination of negative personal experiences and the attendant modification of his world understanding, some of which is charted in *The Rainbow* itself. He now began the serious quest for 'hints of lost wisdom in pre-Christian cultures'. (Kinkead-Weekes 1996: 326)

³⁷ Kinkead-Weekes (1996: 217-24) summarises this process and its effects on the final text of *The Rainbow*.

³⁸ Final proof-readings and corrections, after four versions, took place in July and August 1915, the novel was published on 30 September. It was suppressed by Court Order in November. (Wright 2000: 86; R xxxvii-xlv) For the effects of this on Lawrence see Kinkead-Weekes (1996: 275-82).

³⁹ The key issues were the viability of democracy (Lawrence was against) and functional as opposed to actual religion (he was in favour of the latter as primary inspiration). Holderness 1982:196-197 describes Lawrence's totalitarian tendencies accurately but misses the deeply religious thrust behind the easy-to-mock Ranim quest. An earlier commentator, Armytage (1961: 385-395) is even more disparaging about this, though undoubtedly funny. The abortive wartime relationship between Russell and Lawrence is documented briefly by Russell himself (Russell 1971: 20-24; 33-6), by his biographer Monk (1996: 397-430) and by Lawrence's biographer (Kinkead-Weekes 1996: 258-64). The two biographers agree decisively about the utopian and idealistic political naivety of the one and also about the temperamental psychological evasion and spiritual dissembling of the other. Holderness (1982: 196-197) sees Russell as a challenging and finally evaded influence on Lawrence's thought. He has no concern with the other issue. A resemblance in each of these two protagonists to the differentiations between philosophy and religion in *Johannes Climacus* should not be missed. Faith, prophecy, reason and logical necessity (see Hendry 1982:14) met and utterly misread each other.

⁴⁰ Scholars are unanimous about the considerable extent of this influence and there is general agreement that Burnett's book became a stimulant and endorsement for Lawrence's own sense of direction rather than that it was singularly instructive for him in its own right. See Schneider (1986: 101-3, 154); Lockwood (1987: 178); Chung in Preston & Hoare (1989: 72-3, 82-6); Gilbert (1990: 120n, 136, 333, 336); Ruderman in Widdowson (1992: 112); Poplawski (1993: 137-138); Montgomery (1994: 34-35, 39-40, 140-2, 147); Wright (2000: 112, 171, 238, 241).

How deeply imbued is the final text of *The Rainbow* with some kind of possibly mutated version of Christian spirit and communication, within the explicitness of its imagery, remains contentious in specialised research and debate, according in part to the assumptions brought to it. But certainly the book is informed by a serious exploration of personal religious meaning through biblical primary symbols, at times supported by ecclesial and liturgical data. This expressive dimension is vital to the strategic communication of the novel and at the least it is what we might call 'post-Christian transitional' writing. In 1931, Eliot wrote of a presumed Anglo-Saxon weakness 'to like to hold personal and private religions and to promulgate them.'⁴¹ This characteristic assertion (and summary sapiential tone) nevertheless asserts a serious point about part of the root of his disagreement with Lawrence. But the Lawrence of *The Rainbow* cannot be so crudely dismissed and it is worth bringing alongside Delaney's views the striking description of *The Rainbow* by a modern church historian, with strong literary interests, writing about the First World War period and expressing the admittedly subjective judgement that:

... the English novel *which communicates the vibrant reality of God more perhaps than any other* [italics mine]... was prosecuted for obscenity. (Wilkinson 1996:233)⁴²

But it was of course ostensibly through its social, ethical and sexual inter-personal exploration, so often presented in semi validated religious imagery, particularly at a perceived moment of national crisis and sacrifice, that the novel was found to be unacceptable and was widely condemned. After which Lawrence was a marked man on these counts for the rest of his life and beyond that.

Almost ninety years on, it requires a significant effort of imagination to understand empathically this explicit basis for the rubbishing of *The Rainbow* in 1915. Following Thomas Hardy, in particular, it was given to Lawrence further to explore in fiction the languages of psychophysical inter-sexual communication and integrity in new and important ways.⁴³ For both writers wider social concerns and assumptions in their readerships affected negatively the reception of their work and, still today, they can be both – and Lawrence in particular – credited with some incentive to licence and promiscuity that in view of much of the insight and delicacy of their discriminations seems now generally both ignorant and absurd, as does the critical splitting-off of psycho-sexual matters from other social and political determinants of meaning.⁴⁴ Bell (1992: 220) notes the ironies of our more recent cultural shifts of which Lawrence would not have approved, even as his transgression of taboo played some part in making them possible. Kierkegaard did not and could not deal with such concerns in the ways that became open to Lawrence but his own constant astute preoccupation with the erotic domain and with the ethics of love from within either an implicit or

⁴¹ From *Thoughts After Lambeth*, 1931, cited in SP 206.

⁴² Wilkinson's stringent and valuable chronicle concludes with a quotation from 'Little Gidding' (310).

⁴³ Lawrence completed his 'Study of Thomas Hardy' just before this at the end of 1914 (STH xii). As the novelist John Fowles wrote in 1969: 'Hardy was the first to try to break the Victorian middle-class seal over the supposed Pandora's box of sex ...' (Fowles 1996: 264)

⁴⁴ Michel Foucault's theories and analyses of the functions of socio-political disciplines of sexual control are surely relevant and helpful to the construction of a wider understanding here and it is not necessary to accept all his conclusions or premises still to be grateful for powerful insights afforded by his work. See Reader (1997: 119-132) for a sympathetic critique of Foucault in the light of current models of personhood and societal selfhood with which we now have to engage.

explicit religious grounding or worldview makes for fertile comparison. Both writers operate an ethical control of awareness and, usually, respect for the inexhaustible *other* and its impenetrable presence and mediation, a respect that is artistically mediated as grounded in an envisioned actuality more than through any subjectively imported moral superstructure. Each is further concerned to explore fictively and through other means of discourse the manifold psychic and ethical obstacles to this that humans erect and/or discover both through their mutual interactions and in those with wider reality. None of these concerns, to say the least, are strengths in the writings of T.S. Eliot for whom, by general consensus, the literary exploration of the erotic was highly problematic territory.⁴⁵

In discussion of *The Rainbow* it is frequently the later developments of the novel (and notably the Ursula-Skrebensky relationship) that are explored as illustration of Lawrence's discriminatory approach to sexual relations at this stage of his authorship and certainly the climactic concerns of self-understanding within the critical summons of modernity come most to the fore through this later process and its consequences. However most of this is latent in the characterisation within the earliest strata of the least self-aware character-presentations in the novel. Thus the emergent young man Tom Brangwen comes to sense new complexities of the feminine as he encounters directly and with subsequent distaste, shock and mistrust, the human reality behind the supplementary term 'prostitute' alongside the received and seemingly abiding categories of 'mother' and 'sister'. This becomes a spur, a *felix culpa*, that inaugurates an important but perilous quest. The disillusion of his first carnal contact with a woman, strengthened by his innate desire to find through this encounter the embodiment of his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses, put a bit in his mouth. He found that he had something to lose which he was afraid of losing, which he was not even sure of possessing. This first affair did not matter overmuch: but the business of love, thus shown to have more to it, was, at the bottom of his soul, the most mysterious and terrifying of all to him. (R 20-21)

Impulses are both 'religious' and 'inarticulate' at this opening phase of the narrative and the initiating relationship between Tom and Lydia is coded accordingly. This is a point made by Poplawski (1993: 90) who notes that 'Christian terminology is not integrated within the consciousness of the characters, but is usually added after particular experiences as a part of narratorial comment that helps to define the experience as religious'. In this way, the possibility of an inauthentic, partially apprehended, ill-fitting sacral mediation is early introduced. But this is in sharp contrast to the intertextual literary strategies of Kierkegaard that we have noted above. These proceed in the opposite direction and exercise strong implicit cognitive control. They subvert through irony and furnish a counter-proposal and critique to the 'inspirational' assertions of Adler. Lawrence's rhetorical strain, distorting the primary reference of the terms, is really signalling and anticipating the need for new

⁴⁵ The view of Eliot in this matter is so widespread that to chronicle selected references is almost pointless. However Pinkney (1984) is an interesting study and Cooley (1998) presents a remarkably insightful fictive reading. The demolition via 'existence statement', however, comes through most strongly in Seymour-Jones' (2001) biography of Vivienne Eliot. Because the personal is so much more transparent, 'public' even, in Lawrence he has never been spared controversy or scrutiny. But especially since the groundbreaking feminist attack of Kate Millett (Millett 1969), Lawrence's fictionally expressed love-ethic and indeed his personal psycho-sexuality have come under ongoing critical debate and scrutiny in the last thirty years. See Milne (2001: 204-7 for wider sociological critique and Baldick (2001: 265-6) for somewhat light-hearted summary of later views.

bottles for new wine. But how far is this the aesthetic impoverishment and *reduction* of Christian language, the sort of evacuation of reference of which SK accused Adler (*BOA* 173) and which Eliot detested? The point is important, as is the corollary that, by Kierkegaardian criteria, Lawrence may be a ‘premise-author’, a view that I should refute and to which I shall return.

In this early courtship account in *The Rainbow* human otherness and difference are not only gender-specific but also cultural/linguistic. Lydia is Polish, Tom is English, she is mother and widow, Tom is a bachelor, and she had previously married a doctor and he is a farmer. True meeting across these boundaries is thus arduous, initially slow, then climactic and, subsequently, fitful and incomplete.⁴⁶ The transition-point of courageous assertion of otherness and subsequent deeper meeting between the couple follows Tom’s visit to his scandalous married brother’s educated lover – also a Doctor’s widow – and for Tom a ‘curious separate creature’. (*R* 86) This ‘cued’ encounter affords him a glimpse of a ‘spacious’ world of wider culture and allure and the ensuing episode of renewed martial cleaving follows on from this as both challenge and as call (*R* 87-91) ushered in by scriptural and liturgical language, the indicators here of a still-privileged value and significance. If, in fact, Lawrence *were* defective in teleology with ‘premises for living but no conclusions’, the sure narrative authority and the later so strongly perceived contemporary ‘threat’ of this fiction would be lacking. *The Rainbow* in fact concludes on an ardent note of deferred eschatological hope expressed through the dominant voice of Ursula, the wounded but unbowed daughter of modernity who has emerged out of the pastoral chronicle and the dismantling of romance. Closure and goal are not yet but hope is strong and expressed in the post-catastrophic promise of the (biblical) rainbow.

4. Lawrence as Apostle and Essential Author.

Applying the Kierkegaard/Adler template to Lawrence is of course an uncertain business. There is no biographical, self-defining parity between Adler, Pastor and Office-holder in the established church of his land, and Lawrence, author/exile and quintessentially post-dissenting dissenter ‘without (any) authority’. Claims of ‘originality’ of vision and message just may not be brought to the same tribunal for adjudication because Lawrence was so clearly a non-subscriber. But if Adler was scripturally sub literate, Lawrence manifestly was not, although his use of scripture, as we have noted, is unusual and idiosyncratic in ways, *pace* Wright, that Kierkegaard’s is not, although both men bring a wonderful imaginative creativity to bear on their use of biblical text.⁴⁷ Kierkegaard, like and unlike Newman, is (*pace* Poole) an outstanding spokesman/apologist for Christianity in his time and merits remembrance for that beyond everything else, as he (and Newman) would have wished. My preceding digression explored commonality and difference in Newman

⁴⁶ Of course they mirror closely but not exactly given differentials in the then still-forming relationship between Lawrence and Frieda.

⁴⁷ The explicit consideration of the role of *imagination* in religion has a distinguished lineage in the Post-Enlightenment era with Coleridge as clearly a central figure. Of twentieth and twenty-first century discussions I have found particularly helpful, amongst a vast range, Dillistone (1981, 1984), Prickett (1988), Josipovici (1988, 1998), and many collected and uncollected writings by Donald Allchin and by Rowan Williams. A pivotal text in the last century is Bowker (1978) and two recent books by David Brown (1999, 2000) and one by Esther de Waal (2003) serve to show that this focus of interest in this vital matter continues apace. Eliot’s determined side taking on this matter is undermined somewhat by the painstaking scholarship of Lobb (1981) and see also Montgomery (1994: 218-230).

and Kierkegaard and how at depth they may be seen to meet. Balthasar categorised both, justly, with Pascal, as 'Christian thinkers' and not classical theologians.⁴⁸ T.S. Eliot appears to have aspired once to some minor claim in that former realm but 'the wisdom of humility' must place him well below Balthasar's three men. Eliot the essayist sternly observed aesthetic/religious boundaries as we have seen but the finest of his poetry occupies that no-man's-land between the two and this is the abiding legacy of the poet of *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*.

He struggled with D.H. Lawrence, securing only a 'flawed demolition', much as Kierkegaard did with Alfred Adler, according to Steiner's (1988) reading. But whereas Adler vocationally challenged Kierkegaard, Eliot's responses to Lawrence proceed from multiple causes and partly from the latter's challenge to his own guarded vulnerability, as he acknowledged. F.R. Leavis worried latterly this particular nerve and more recently the ambitious, risky but in part persuasive literary-psycho study by Donald Childs (1997), as his title denoted, examined the posited subliminal threat, identity obverted through asserted difference, that Lawrence the man and writer posed to Eliot the man and mystic. [See, especially, Childs (1997: xx, 131-7, 151-85)] Childs concludes his carefully-referenced and wide-ranging study on a humanely ascetic 'soft' note of reconciliation:

... even classical mystics, the most responsible of religious adventurers, are romantics at heart - if they are human, and especially if they are sons and lovers. (Childs: 1997: 225)

This may indeed say something about very late Eliot but it leaves the case of Lawrence still veiled. This is partly because, like Kierkegaard, he died young and in controversy.

Given the tenor of my preceding argument I just cannot categorise Lawrence as a 'premise author'. Lawrence's premises and conclusions for living, expressed differently and unevenly throughout his authorship, could be fairly described as a response to life's own intrinsic value and wonder, its presentation of alterity at every turn of the subject's attention, the primary quality of 'wonder' as he defined it in the very late piece, 'Hymns in a Man's Life' (for text see *LEA*). This was something experienced in one for whom the awareness of death was necessarily and personally present throughout his life. This is a consistent stance and one better mediated through the primary languages of religious orientation than of philosophy, as Lawrence in his refashioning did and as Kierkegaard so wonderfully discriminated in *Johannes Climacus* (see discussions above). The texture of Lawrence's writing is indeed uneven – he over-wrote (of necessity, to live, but he also exhaustively revised) and the worst of it tends not so much to bombast as to rant. But that his wonderful late poetry proceeded from a deeply realised contemplative centre I shall demonstrate later.

Lawrence from within his own artistic and spiritual formation also wrote generally from what he knew (and so quickly apprehended as, for example, his Australian wrings indicate) and he communicated a steadily value-laden vision. In fact the power of his writings has made the ordinary practice of a potentially negative critical alertness of response difficult for some members of a constituency in other ways not

⁴⁸ See Nichols (2001: 180). This is not of course a derogatory delineation.

notably so constrained. Between outright antagonism and downright adulation there has not always been much of a middle way with Lawrence.⁴⁹ Predominantly these are features too of the 'essential' author and Eliot, in his struggle with Lawrence, acknowledged this from the start when for him the battle was hardest. (See *ASG* 60) What can become destructive, negative or devouring in Lawrence's work is a pervasive tendency to irresponsible individualism that betrays, vitiates or reduces his dominant key, his deeply positive (and Kierkegaardian) core vision of the potential for infinite relation out of true selfhood as for example Ursula discovers in *The Rainbow*. (R 408-9) This reduction or corruption may be focused, though not exhaustively, on some doublethink and special pleading on the dangerous subject of adultery, of relational abandonment and betrayal, strong themes in much of Lawrence.⁵⁰ There is too a proclivity to annihilating hateful dismissal when (sometimes rightly) roused and this links with the exaggerated tendency to power-worship in the generally disappointing 'leadership phase' of his novels climaxing in the violent excesses of *The Plumed Serpent* (a text I find hard to read).⁵¹ But against these blemishes there is so much that is conducive to flourishing. He was not mentally confused and he did not yield (with some real cost as he was a 'true extraordinary') to external pressure to rewrite or to betray his visions. His message was not a disposable option: signs of dialectical ambivalence found in his texts will often be found on closer reading to be part of an ongoing process of exploring and interrogative debate.⁵²

His usage of scripture is intricate but un-Kierkegaardian, his argument with it unresolved almost to the end. We cannot compare him with the churchman Newman or the Protester Kierkegaard except in a commonality, beneath and beyond combativeness and vast differences in gifting and situation, in purity of heart. Distinguishing Lawrence from 'a large number of modern novelists and poets', Wayne Booth wrote that:

The final effect of reading his novels is to feel that here is one artist whose work serves life rather than bleeding it in the name of art. (Booth 1990: 26)

This is what is still fresh in Lawrence and removes him decisively from any Adlerian tag. He resisted in his art and in his life, for an Englishman of his time, 'the most adverse social and political circumstances. (Booth 1990: 25) Far from retreating further into the category of the aesthetic with a wounded ego, Lawrence continued to move forward, to experiment and to grow, finally more and more beyond the foothills of the religious, on a journey of kenotic hope.

I turn now to a Kierkegaardian reading of *Women In Love*.

⁴⁹ Marianna Torgovnick (Torgovnick 2001: 33-6) effectively and stringently considers this recently diminishing feature.

⁵⁰ The themes are deeply part of the evolution of the European novel, of course. But in the societal-ethical realm they are 'dangerous' and destructive to individuals, families and communities a serious art should acknowledge. See Raymond Williams's discriminating discussion, 'Social and Personal Tragedy: Tolstoy and Lawrence'. (Williams 1960: 121-138) Forty-six years on this has lost none of its essential and judiciously fair gravity and all intuitive 'Lawrentians' should be made to read it!

⁵¹ Here if ever Lawrence was not writing from what he 'knew'.

⁵² Wayne Booth demonstrates this in his delightfully ironically positive 'Confessions of a Lukewarm Lawrentian'. No one since Leavis (with the possible exception of Bell) has so convincingly argued for the full measure of Lawrence as a writer for adults. See especially Booth (1990: 16-21).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Repetition, the Stages and Their Consequences in Lawrence and in Kierkegaard

“Why did you come home, Prune?” she asked.

Gudrun knew she was being admired. She sat back from her drawing and looked at Ursula, from under her finely-curved lashes.

“Why did I come back, Ursula?” she repeated. “I have asked myself, a thousand times.”

“And don’t you know?”

“Yes, I think I do. I think my coming back home was just *reculer pour mieux sauter*.”

And she looked with a long, slow look of knowledge at Ursula.

“I know!” cried Ursula, looking slightly dazzled and falsified, and as if she did *not* know. “But where can one jump *to*?”

“Oh, it doesn’t matter,” said Gudrun, somewhat superbly. “If one jumps over the edge, one is bound to land somewhere.”

“But isn’t it very risky?” asked Ursula.

A slow, mocking smile dawned on Gudrun’s face.

“Ah!” she said, laughing. “What is it all but words!” (WL 10)

The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of *depth*. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language. – Let us ask ourselves: why do we feel a grammatical joke to be *deep*? (Wittgenstein 1967: 47)

The first and defining point of exploration in this chapter is the concept of Repetition, a strategy common both to Kierkegaard and to D.H. Lawrence (as the quotation above indicates). It is an experimental notion in both writers, one that each used differently as a conceptual/psychological tool with consequent stylistic manifestation. In each author it is a method of linguistic and existential exploration, the first a key resource for the second. In early Kierkegaard, repetition is a behaviour-pattern associated primarily with the aesthetic stage and a discussion of this related to *Women In Love* follows. I go on to consider the aesthetic/ethical boundary as Birkin and Ursula exemplify this in the concluding scenarios of *Women In Love* and I end this chapter with reflection on Lawrence’s presented meaning of the death of Gerald Crich.

1. Repetition in Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard’s *experimental* and *aesthetic* authorship, in the earlier pseudonymous phase, is essentially concerned with possibility. This class of his writings has a *hypothetical* implication – the subject of a text is offered as what *might* be the case. The strategy of *indirect communication* creates a distancing between author and reader with the intention of compelling evaluative decision. The approach is maieutic – the author is a Socratic midwife to the thought-process of the auditor/reader and the technique is that of a Wittgensteinian ‘deep joke’. So the (1843) novella *Repetition (a venture in experimenting psychology)*, a work of central importance in the

understanding of Kierkegaard,¹ has no real closure to its plot. Instead two life-possibilities, which are parallel and cannot intersect, are pseudonymously enacted for the reader. In his mid-term (1846) review of the didactic intent of his writings, in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard/Climacus describes *Repetition* as ‘a doubly reflected communication form’ that actually precludes the reader’s direct understanding. (CUP 263) In the valedictory letter of the novella itself the narrator-persona Constantin presents *himself* as midwife to the Young Man, ‘whereas I am a vanishing person’. (R 230) He both offers and withdraws praise, retaining some mode of superior perspective (‘I frequently had to tease him so that he himself could emerge’) whilst remaining below ‘what he attains’. This ironic upward-looking perspective in narrative strategy is found in other works of this phase – notably the (1843) companion text *Fear and Trembling* and the axial *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* itself.²

The narrator of *Repetition* undergoes a rote-rehearsal of previous experiences with the elusive goal of recapitulating sensation. Constantin at the end of his hopeful but disappointed trip to Berlin is agitated to a point of fury and weariness at the accumulated minutiae of changes calamitously disclosed through the succession of his meticulously revisited experiments. He returns home, envisaging at least satisfaction and ‘hope’ in the predictability and ‘prepared for repetition’ of that secure and self-possessed realm, only to disturb and affright his now *unpredictable* servant in the midst of a detailed, somewhat surreptitious and certainly disruptive domestic re-ordering. The hapless man is so agitated at the unwonted confrontation with his master that Constantin finds his own door slammed in his face and is finally left with the doleful but irrefutable perception that ‘there is no repetition ...’ (R 171)

The complementary failed-romance plot of *Repetition* is a latter-day and ironic adjunct to the European tradition inaugurated by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s tragic tale *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774; trans. 1779), which became the model for numerous subsequent narratives of passionate subjectivity. (See Pattison 1992:140) But Kierkegaard’s novella has a deliberately concealed autobiographical thrust related to his own broken engagement in October 1841, which initially he had hoped to retrieve. He revised this work at the last minute when he discovered, in July 1843, that his ex-fiancée, Regine Olsen, had become engaged in June to Johan Frederik Schlegel. Before this textual incision prompted by intervention from the authorial reality, the Young Man’s story in *Repetition* was to end with his suicide.

The concept and process of repetition as the retrieval and restoration of the integrity of a past experience (*reculer pour mieux sauter*) is indeed comically refined and questioned throughout the work. Constantin the narrator understands very little, is a comic exemplar of the *failure* to repeat and has a mock-rationalist and ironic stooge-function within the text, hence the ‘double reflection’. Whereas the Young Man,

¹ ‘... enigmatic but probably decisive’ is George Steiner’s apt designation of its place in SK’s authorship. (Steiner 1998:104)

² In *Fear and Trembling* Johannes de Silentio ‘does not understand Abraham’. The variegated monologue-discourses of this ‘Dialectical Lyric’ are presented by a pseudonymous author who is confessedly ‘below’ this textual drama of theodicy and whose position therefore represents an explicit and intended message of cognitive boundary setting. In CUP Johannes Climacus is a self-proclaimed investigative ‘outsider’ both to the objective and subjective issues appertaining to Christianity that are his detailed concerns. His prolonged discussion ends with a joke (CUP 615-6), which is modulated in a subsequent Appendix and then ‘placed’ by the real author’s – Kierkegaard’s – own unmasking.

allegedly suicidal like Werther, emancipates himself when his fiancée marries someone else, by becoming a poet through an unlikely transference-inspiration by the Old Testament faith-hero, Job. The reader is only given any direct address from this character in the late epistolary stage in the sequence, as he introduces a different category of progressive response – one of which Constantin is incapable – and which can only be communicated to the reader by a new medium of self-presentation. The double-reflection (so characteristic of Kierkegaard) is still maintained by the narrator's concluding 'evaluation' of this process 'from below', a device paralleled in *Fear and Trembling* and in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.³

Inasmuch as the young man in *Repetition* obtains an accidental repetition through the marriage of his fiancée, the suicide catastrophe was replaced by his future as a poet. References to suicide in earlier portions of the final manuscript clearly had to be altered or omitted. Now Constantius and the young man become parodies of each other: Constantius despairs of aesthetic repetition because of the contingency of life, and the young man despairing of personal repetition in relation to the ethical, obtains aesthetic repetition by accident.⁴ (R: xx)

There are – to say the least – considerable difficulties of exegesis in this text.⁵ One brilliant idiosyncratic example takes on the majority, received view by a combination of polemic, close analysis, and discreet biographical interpolation. The late Roger Poole's 1993 reading⁶ was within its own terms persuasive, however those terms are unduly restrictive and imprison the text within his own hypothetically formative analysis and psychological prejudgement foreclosing development. They do not allow for the undoubted growth-points of latent themes that, with all its shortcomings, the earlier 'readerly tradition', dismissed by Poole in this text, *does* allow correctly for – and this is truer to Kierkegaard.⁷

In fact a working concept of Kierkegaardian repetition may be deduced as *continuity* of developmental existence, a process transcending the prolongation of pleasure and one to be defined finally within an eternal/spiritual referent, as we shall see. At an early stage repetition is resisted as boredom – and as antidote novelty and diversion are sought. A later recognition of the *unavoidability* of repetition prompts a new strategy and leads to the 'Constantinian' or properly 'aesthetic' search for the variant *possibilities* of repetition, a quest that can operate across a very broad canvas indeed.

³ See Note 2 above.

⁴ For textual changes see R 276-81.

⁵ The appreciative contemporary review published by Professor J.L. Heiberg in 1844, praising its significance in the world of natural phenomenon rather than the world of spirit, evoked a witty and urgent counter-response from the author. *F&T/R* 379-83 gives the relevant Heiberg text with Kierkegaard's responses on pp. 283-326.

⁶ See Poole (1993:60-82). This is indeed a 'work of love' and a bold cross-disciplinary exercise in critical theory. However, I work from different assumptions about Kierkegaard.

⁷ For a conclusively persuasive re-statement of the broad outline of this view see Watkin (1997) and in particular the important statement on p. 3: '... after many years with Kierkegaard I still have no hesitation in accepting the overall tenor of what he says. While he clearly realises creativity and development, both in himself and in the authorship, his claim that he is consciously a religious author firmly supports an understanding of his writings that causes the entire authorship to hang together in a well-connected whole. My assessment [...] does not depend on Kierkegaard's own explanations, however, but also on a careful consideration of sources, of the critics' objections, and finally of material that has never before to my knowledge been given its proper due.' See also, for the specific concerns of this discussion, Watkin (1997:28-9, 43).

The final and third movement reverses the defining interest of the first two, whereby repetition becomes the goal and actualises freedom under the eternal, fearing only the disturbance power of what was once earnestly sought as diverting change and variety. It emerges from the first two stages, is latent within them, but is unforeseeable from within them also. Thus the Kierkegaardian subject, the Young Man of *Repetition*, realises a different ending of the story of Job than the Old Testament narrative, as received or allowed, or indeed he or Constantin or the reader of a romantic novella would rightly expect: his fiancée, unlike Job's material happiness, is not returned to him but neither does he despair. Instead he rejoices.⁸

2. Repetition in Lawrence, with reference to *Women In Love*.

2.1 Generic Comment: Apocalyptic depicts the inability to repeat or to go forward.

In *Women in Love* the intricate tensions are sustained through abrupt, often brief narrative sequence and sectional structure. This pressure frequently distorts or suspends focus through the 'naturalistic' category of history, which nevertheless retains a severely qualified sort of primacy within the text. Bell (1997:97) has written that the development of Lawrence's fiction 'increasingly struggles with the realistic novel form itself'. Thus *Women in Love* updates the Brangwens' chronicle of *The Rainbow* to a present time and 'historical narrative gives way to a spatialised one as Lawrence contrasts different world-projections within a single modern generation.'⁹ This telescoping also has the effect of diminishing the possibility of any base for direct, classically prophetic engagement and becomes a major part of the way in which Lawrence images social and spiritual dissonance. The eschatological and apocalyptic shift that dominated *The Rainbow*'s close continues as a steady pitch of meaning in the later work, becoming a brilliantly controlled but deranged form of elusive repetition.

From its earliest ancient (biblical) forms, the genre of apocalyptic has purported to unveil transcendent meaning beyond the quotidian reach of the human mind through the deployment of a coded imagery and narrative perspective.¹⁰ In *Women In Love* it continues that function after a fashion but with the additional and disturbing fact that the goal of *meaning* remains unclear at the level of any final extrapolation from the narrative logic of the book. Biblical scholarship on the ancient origins of apocalyptic

⁸ Biblical exegetes have themselves questioned the rightness of the 'happy ending' both on critical and textual grounds. For an interesting parallel application of Kierkegaard's repetition-process to an English writer, see Prickett (1976: 268-73). I have already acknowledged that I am indebted to his 'Appendix: Wordsworth and Kierkegaard' both for its method and its insight.

⁹ Bell's thesis is informed by the Nietzschean concept of the dominant relativising 'world-view' perspective in modernity and he builds on his earlier Heideggerian hermeneutic key to Lawrence's praxis and concern. See also Bell (1992). My Kierkegaardian readings will engage with some of the same concerns differently.

¹⁰ For representative considerations of Lawrence's idiosyncratic approach, see Kermode (1968) and Fjågesund (1991). Consideration of Lawrence's last book *Apocalypse* will form part of the summative discussion of this thesis. It is instructive that this *genre* comes into direct authorial focus of interest at the end of Lawrence's life. See Kalnins (1980) and for discussion of continuing and sustained western influence of the genre, Cohn (1970). Armytage (1961:385-401) gives an amused and accurate narrative of the accompanying Utopian quest in Lawrence's life and its sequel in John Middleton Murray. The confinement and despair of *Women In Love* were accompanied by an energetic procreative effort in real life.

as literary form traces it as far back as the third century BCE.¹¹ Its origins are eschatological - the concern with *endings*, with final destiny, vindication and death - but apocalyptic is further distinguished from this in being a re-figured, typological and literary codification of visionary pitch, as Theodicy in response to historical failures of socially restorative hope. It is an unveiling of reality, of how things really are; it is an *apokalypsis* (revelation) of the 'true significance of persons and events'. (Rowland 1988:10) The process, which is often subject to vacillating fortunes in textual transmission and acceptance, energises the later writings of the Old Testament and infuses, sometimes and arguably, to a point of definition, the New Testament Gospel proclamation. It is fascinating, although conscious connections cannot be made, to note that a major scholarly shift in western understanding about all this took place as Lawrence began his literary career. But the Theodicy in Lawrence's *Dies Ira* is strictly metaphorical – wrath without God.

Women In Love is an exemplary modernist text and one for which a truncated mode of apocalyptic is highly serviceable. Departure from what has been known is the early note, fecundity and community, so prominent in the agrarian chronicle of *The Rainbow*, do not figure, except as remote longing and scarcely as memory. Marriage is not – *whatever* it was – *what* it was. Generally, there is no access. There is no precise socio-historical association for the narrative in *Women In Love* either. 'I should wish the time to remain unfixed ...' Lawrence wrote in his 1919 'Foreword'. (WL 485) The text 'concerns itself less with evocations of a lost world than with a moment of history understood as a crisis archetype.' (Kermode 1969:214) 'We are now in a period of crisis ...,' Lawrence wrote in the same text. (WL 486) The 'now' - the moment (a Kierkegaardian term) – is the primary datum of the novel, and Lawrence attends to this through a distinctive composite form. Pinkney (1990:89) has observed: 'For all the novel's talk of imminent social crisis and apocalypse, it is, politically speaking, an unanchored and undated work.' This 'veiled quality' is, of course, *pace* Pinkney, a characteristic of the historic apocalyptic genre throughout.

Reference in Chapter V to the *Daily Telegraph* leader ('essay, almost') that Birkin and Gerald peruse on their train journey to London is instructive. The contextual anchorage of this piece is in mood not events and it anticipates a 'crumbling nothingness ... a country in ruin' (WL 54) in need of arrest by a revivifying messianic figure. Both readers acknowledge a genuine implication in the article but each is - differently - detached from any personal affect or import: Gerald because it invites that speculative realm of discourse which he relishes but by which he is always inwardly unpersuaded: Birkin because his search for the 'appearance of the new' is 'in the *self*' - the only authentic category for him - as for Kierkegaard. Thus Birkin (WL 54) dismisses the writer of the essay as one who 'means it, as far as he means

¹¹For details see Section 6.4 'Late prophetic and apocalyptic theology of resistance' in Albartz (1994:563-97). Albartz (1994: 564) sees the 'development of Yahweh religion from a historical religion of liberation to an eschatological religion of redemption' as the decisive change of this period. Nineteenth-century European critical New Testament scholarship had sidelined the eschatological strands within the canon in the interests of a historical reconstruction, which deemed it superfluous. The decisive change came, interestingly, in our period, when in 1906, Albert Schweitzer published his critical retrospect, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, the English translation of which, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, appeared in 1910. Schweitzer named eschatology - decisively - as the interpretative key to the New Testament world and message, although confusing it, unhelpfully, with its literary cousin, apocalyptic. See Rowland (1988:5) for a helpful brief summary of this.

anything,' because useful meaning must be sought *outside* such concerns. This is - precisely - what Kierkegaard called 'fooling', here both in stimulus and response:

... for if it is true that every man must work for his own salvation, then all the prophecies about the future of the world are only valuable and allowable as a recreation, or a joke, like playing bowls or cards. (*PA* 96).

Pinkney (1990:89) makes a further helpful point where imprecision of reference points up an important theme that is later to be discarded or left behind in *Women in Love*. He cites the (conflated) historical-political reference in Chapter VIII to a cabinet crisis over education that causes a ministerial resignation. The announcement of this in the novel is followed by a Breadalby chatter-discussion of mock-pedantry that concludes, for the guests, with the amazed advent of 'a large tea-tray', a detail that further trivialises and reduces 'meaning' (*WL* 85-87) as does Birkin's summarising dismissal on the train cited above. This is the social and cultural milieu of Prufrock's disengaged world, 'talking of Michelangelo'; a realm at least in part captivating to Gerald and characterised by what Kierkegaard called 'talkativeness', the recreational parody or evasion of a truly passionate engagement or concern:

In a passionate age great events (for they correspond to each other) give people something to talk about. Talkativeness, on the contrary, has, in quite another sense, plenty to talk about. And when the event is over, and silence follows, there is still something to remember and to think about while one remains silent. But talkativeness is afraid of the silence which reveals its emptiness. (*PA* 78-9)

The ensuing plot enacts the most decisive dismissal of that social and educational topic when Birkin and Ursula themselves later resign from their jobs and leave the country. Education, in *The Rainbow*, had been the route of Ursula's differentiating growth into self-awareness and modernity from a broadly *undifferentiated* Brangwen consciousness. Lawrence's discarded 'Prologue' to *Women In Love* refers to Birkin's brilliant Oxford career (he was a Fellow of Magdalen College), his 'passionate study of education', and subsequent profession of schools inspector. By the final text only the inspectorship remains but the 'Prologue' is helpfully explicit about the background of Birkin's disillusion with the goal of education - 'nothing but the process of building up, gradually, a complete unit of consciousness', a contradictory effort in the time of 'a corresponding process of decay and decomposition from some old, fulfilled, obsolete idea ...', where there remains only 'the essential futility of all attempt at social unanimity in constructiveness.' (*WL* 505-6) A Kierkegaardian form of singleness is the goal, then, opposed to social engineering or even the shared task, but this is to be complemented in this text by the longing for 'star-polarity' and intimacy; the high price of which is independence in isolation.

Time and event lack meaning and so does place. Gudrun and Ursula have differentiated and complementary reactions to Breadalby, consistent with the emerging aesthetic and moral stance in each. For Gudrun, the artist, the visual spectacle of Breadalby has an unlovable fixity of completeness. Her assessment is decisively formulated, 'placed', whereas Ursula's characteristically *exploratory* personalised responsiveness is at this point paradoxical *and* earthed. She feels herself there 'within a magic circle ... shutting out the present ... But in spirit she was

unhappy.’ (WL 84) The society within the house is directionless and futile and it is, of course, *Hermione’s* home, a cultural enclave, a brittle island of falsely tenacious mental self-consciousness about to become murderous. By the end of this chapter Birkin, for whom the ‘lovely accomplished past’ represented by the place is an allure become a ‘snare’,¹² has been assailed by Hermione and sought healing of body and spirit by immolation in the open countryside, the outlying wilderness. There is no living continuity with the past, the present is indeterminate and prophecies about the future are either recreational or nihilistic. The presentment of entrapment and control has been fulfilled and contrasting strategies of emancipation have to evolve.

They do so indeterminately: the novel ends with a death, followed by stunned, unresolved and ruefully forward-looking dialogue - with the third surviving major character moving sideways or downwards out of vision. There is no closure: the reader may ask, with Eliot’s also disinherited ‘dead winter’ travellers: ‘Were we led all that way for/ Birth or Death?’ (CPP 103-4) Like them *we* can only be sure of the latter. This is why *Women In Love* is so far from any Kierkegaardian or Wittgensteinian joke because each major character in the novel, homeless in time and space, is actively seeking his own salvation, pre-eminently Birkin and Ursula in the project of their socially deracinated marriage and Gerald and Gudrun in their experimental exploitation of each other.

2.2 Textual Examples: Modes of repetition in characterisation.

In Lawrence’s remarkable characterisation of Hermione Roddice, repetition in this novel can be seen as a technique for the projection both of self-mastery and self-suppression, a personal camouflage against exposure and nothingness. In the plot-strategy Hermione is foil and early focus for the relationship of Birkin and Ursula, but she is also a means of contrast and comparison with the unfolding revelation of Gudrun and, distinctly of course, of Ursula herself. Her early entry in the novel comes with a reduction of narrative-pace, at the moment of social *angst* at the Crich wedding. She is a major character of the novel’s first movement, foregrounded at this early stage for the introduction of Rupert Birkin, just as Gerald Crich had been presented a few pages earlier through Gudrun’s absorbed perception and transported being, paired symbolically with his mother.¹³ One of the Chief Bridesmaids, Hermione is immediately visualised through the dual, criss-crossing perception of Lawrence/Ursula as a self-alienated presence: ‘... she drifted along with a peculiar fixity of the hips, a strange unwilling motion.’ (WL 15) Yet she is, despite these limits of control, delineated as a firm visual, eccentric physical and psychic presence, assertive in appearance but quintessentially dependent in her being, the expression of a hapless endeavour to resolve inner torment. ‘... a strange mass of thoughts coiled in the darkness within her and she was never allowed to escape.’ (WL 15 and also 16) This can only be authorial comment but Lawrence’s technique allows by implication the shared intuition also of the ‘fascinated’ attentive Ursula. (WL 15-16) Both sisters stand *outside* Hermione, Ursula through fundamental differentiation of being to be unfolded more through the progression of the Birkin relationship, Gudrun through a

¹² Note the complexity of the internal argument of the passage in question enacted by sense and sound, a cry for self-created freedom. (WL 97)

¹³ WL 14-15. *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1990) gives as second and third meanings for ‘wolf’: ‘2 *sl.* a man given to seducing women. 3 a rapacious or greedy person.’ Gerald’s dynasty in decay represents meaning 3 and in himself he actualises 2 and 3. Gudrun is drawn to both.

much more distanced authorial projection which at the same time informs of a fuller – and linking – background of acquaintance. (*WL* 16) The link is more than social: both are aesthetic and predatory but Gudrun, as yet latent, has the ruthlessness and self-propelling will-to-power of the survivor, whilst there is from the start an aura of arrested haplessness about Hermione.

This can be illustrated from the later development of the novel where we can contrast the explicit and responsive violence of Gudrun (*WL* 170-1; 241-3; 432-3) with Hermione's despairingly possessive 'drugged' assault on Birkin. (*WL* 104-6) It is more serious violence but it is impotent. Ingram (1990: 62-3) writing of this passage has noted, surely correctly, a humorous disjunction in Hermione's absorption in 'the peripheral details of the deed', a deed which is muffled. Her very ecstasy here is comically displaced, just as Constantin's strategies of re-visitation and retention so misfire in *Repetition*. In the contrasting case of Gudrun both attack and withdrawal/reconciliatory relapse are fully focused at each appropriate moment whereas Gerald blusters. This is why this woman can finally cause death. (See in particular the moment of resolve in *WL* 413 and the movements of interaction in *WL* 441-7.)

Returning to the introductory presentation of Hermione, we see that a further narrative shift takes us within her own consciousness and Lawrence uses the device of linguistic repetition to present the constant vigilance of her self-presentation as of 'first rank [...] invulnerable [...] invulnerable' over the suppression of the exposure of the 'vulnerable [...] vulnerable' inchoate self within. (*WL* 16) This point is also made by Ingram (1990:114) and it is surely remarkable that Lawrence's characters are so finely differentiated even as our discreet consciousness of them is made to elide within a narrative that is also utilising and organising them as devices of plot.

In the next and immediate narrative turn we discover that it is Rupert Birkin, for whom Hermione 'craved', who is her chosen instrument to 'close up this deficiency,' to seal up, out of consciousness and sight, this inner void, this vacancy of terror, 'this bottomless pit of insufficiency [...] terrible gap of insufficiency'. (*WL* 17) The 'years' of being lovers had been a tiring and losing battle of possessiveness on her part. She, in her sophisticated aesthetic pose as a *Kulturträger* (*WL* 16), is trapped in the tyrannical moment of her Kierkegaardian stage, unable to grow, to leap. In a stylistic idiom of sense repetition, reminiscent of the Hebraic parallelisms of psalmody,¹⁴ Hermione strives to expresses the fulfilment of union that she experiences with Birkin in a manner that actually undermines the intended sense of the words as if the enactment in language, a lunge to the positive, will compensate or suffice for the negative actuality, *arrest* it even, that about which she is so deeply unsure. 'When he was there, she felt complete, she was sufficient, whole.' But there is a contrastingly direct, iterative and brutally reinforcing repetition that denotes the resistant response of Birkin mediated through her own consciousness.

He was perverse too. He fought her off, he always fought her off. The more she strove to bring him to her, the more he battled her back. (*WL* 17)

¹⁴ See discussion in preceding chapter.

This is indeed language resonant of ‘deep disquietude’.¹⁵ *Women In Love*, wrote Gāmini Salgādo (Widdowson 1992:143), after some instructive textual readings, ‘is centrally paradoxical because it is shot through with the continuous and continually felt tension between the necessity of articulating a vision and its impossibility, and sometimes its undesirability.’¹⁶ Like *Repetition* it is ‘a doubly reflected communication form’ that actually precludes the reader’s direct understanding (*CUP* 263) and two of its characteristic modes are iterative and apocalyptic. Hermione’s vision of needful ‘conjunction’, ‘holy connection’ and ‘highest fate’ are undermined, unattained even by her own violence.

Gudrun/Lawrence at the close of an unhappy passage of reverie about the ending of her blocked relationship with Gerald (that will also end in – lethal -violence) asks:

‘Oh how could she bear it, this endless unrelief, this eternal unrelief.’
(*WL* 465)

It is an unmarked question and thus becomes a statement. It *must* be born (Gudrun is survivor/victor). The stylistic repetition of this passage has been noted by Swift who writes (1990:127):

An anxiety over language manifests itself in two paired ideas of death in *Women In Love*: the “dead-alive ... word-bag” (*WL* 188) state of the subject obliterated in its submission to repetition, and the oblivion of biological death – the desired death that ends all repetition and restores the self (atrophied, vitiated by language) paradoxically to itself: “Better die,” thinks Ursula (the *vital* subject), “than live mechanically a life that is a repetition of repetitions.” (*WL* 192)¹⁷

Lawrence is utilising a device here that relates closely to the Kierkegaardian strategies in various ways. Thus the quest for eternal happiness brings unrelief, leading to repetition and the aesthetic impasse. For Swift, following Freud, and parodying Wallace Stevens, ‘Death is the mother of repetition’. For Kierkegaard repetition (and death – so far the *petit-mortes* of broken relationships as in Lawrence here) *can* reveal ultimately a capacity for transcendence. Present self-awareness is always linked to past recall and future anticipation – and such is the classical view.¹⁸ The Kierkegaardian ‘moment’, so-called, attainable through repetition, is the authentic and interlinked present, a state of openness to existence. The condition of an alienated modernity – post-Kierkegaardian existentialism perhaps, certainly early and later Eliot, and the world of *Women In Love* - is a disrupted existence, severed from one or other of the primal temporal strata.

3. Lawrencian/Kierkegaardian Discernment of the Destructive Aesthete.

¹⁵ See also the discussion in Ingram (1990:116-7).

¹⁶ Indeed Widdowson himself in the same volume concludes: “What I am suggesting in short is that *Women In Love* finally articulates the ‘impossible’: at once the propagation and the negation of its philosophy of life.” (1992:23)

¹⁷ Swift’s interesting discussion of various passages exploits a Lacanian and Freudian interest (e.g. *WL* 188, 477-8) but the Kierkegaardian reading, which is offered here, yields more and also illuminates Lawrence’s moral concern and teleological experiment.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Augustine *Confessions* XI, xxviii. (Warner 1963:282)

Lawrence's central and surviving couple, Ursula and Birkin, proceeding, *processing*, to their indeterminate post-apocalyptic future together are safeguarded only in this disrupted and deracinated existence by two Kierkegaardian virtues: aesthetic discernment and commitment one to another. Gerald and Gudrun lack both of these but for Ursula/Birkin the first is a *given* of their being in the novel, the second is also a *given*, but one which they have reached out to grasp. In this section the discernment is discussed.

We noted above the sisters' differentiated but complementary responses to Hermione's Breadalby. We see also that the Crich home, Shortlands, has for them distinction of 'form' and 'period' ill-matched to its current and 'improving' inhabitants. In the 'Diver' chapter (*WL* 46-52), Gerald has just swum self-exultantly into and out of their vision and manifested his dominant, spuriously vital, undifferentiated energy, here seeking its equipoise in water. The 'grey, *uncreated* water' (*WL* 46) is glossed by F.R. Leavis (1976: 67-9) as a 'quasi-technical' term descriptive of *Gerald's* inauthenticity and incompleteness as a self and constructive agent. His critique requires an acknowledged transfer of adjectival signification, qualifying not the water but Gerald which (unusually and needlessly) vitiates his case. This forces a reading as 'novel metaphor', in the sense defined by Paul Ricoeur as a 'new semantic situation' where:

... the solution of the enigma raised by the tension or the semantic clash on which the metaphor is built no longer relies on the existence of a previous system of associated commonplaces, on a range of connotative values which would already be at our disposal [...] We can no longer speak of connotative meanings waiting for our use. (Ricoeur 1991:79)

This ironically points to a type of negative criticism often levelled in the past at Lawrence, to which Leavis's elaborate cross-reference and exegesis is a (most uncharacteristic) misplaced response. Michael Bell (1992:111) gives a more linguistically coherent (and equally nuanced) reading that can contain, as I shall show, the essence of Leavis' major point. The water at first perceived by/through the sisters as 'grey and visionary' (*WL* 46) becomes an 'otherworld, wet and remote' which is now possessed by Gerald at his intrusion: superimposed, acted on, by him. Bell allows the obvious possibility of the Genesis reference here, on which I insist. Genesis 1.2 refers to the *tohuwabohu*, the formless and void:

... the primeval waters over which darkness was superimposed characterises the chaos materially as a watery primeval element, but at the same time gives a dimensional association: *te hôm* ('sea of chaos') is the cosmic abyss. This damp primeval element, however was agitated by a divine storm [...] The much disputed *merahepet* [...] is not to be translated by 'brood' but [...] 'vibrate', 'tremble', 'move', 'stir' [...] *Rûah 'elôhîm* ('Spirit of God') is better translated 'storm of God,' i.e. terrible storm ... (Von Rad 1963:47)

Gerald is that type of Gnostic demiurgic force that violates the base matter as Bell (1992:111) writes he: 'erupts on the scene in such a way as to change it into his own likeness.' This reading is consistently in character with the reducer of rabbits, horses, women and the subterranean mineral resources of the earth. It embraces the essence

of Leavis's moral insight and Gerald's destructive, restless (*not* creative, *not* realised) spirit is stilled finally only by the frozen form of this element. This is an end foreseen in Ursula's wry feminine observation: 'He'll have to die soon when he's made every possible improvement,' and his *go* '... goes in applying the latest appliances', an early experience of which resulted in fratricide. There is as before contrast in opinion and response in Gudrun, of course ('desirous'): a differentiation carefully sustained throughout. (*WL* 48-9) Leavis notes this and the significance that Gudrun is an artist (1976:69, 71) because it is her inherently diverting and detached artistic intelligence, her aestheticism in the Kierkegaardian sense, which is electrically drawn to Gerald, in the unformed, unconscious pathos behind his veneer and in the assertiveness of his finally nullified power, and which then abandons him for Loerke, aesthete as nihilist and solipsistic survivor. Leavis expounds the actual nature of this from within his own reading of Lawrencian categories (1976:73-7) with Ursula, moving from attraction to revulsion, as clear Lawrencian touchstone for the contrastingly decisive response of her sister to the multiglot German. Bell (1992:128-9) asserts correctly that Loerke 'takes the aesthetic as his most serious category' and demonstrates effectively the contrast between his assimilation/absorption of 'otherness' into the controlling ambience of his work, whether the 'primitives' of West Africa or the Aztecs or a former student on a horse, with the responsiveness to potential for consciousness, for life, that Birkin/Lawrence attains by process of contemplative *attention* to an African statuette of a woman, a Chinese drawing of a goose or , and this is especially telling, shared with Ursula, excluding Hermione, the class-room representation of catkins.

4. The Proto-Ethical Stage: Birkin/Ursula

From first to last it is a novel that probes, deconstructs and wontedly redefines the marriage project. *Women in Love* opens with talk of a 'better position', 'a good offer', 'a thousand a year and an awfully nice man' (*WL* 7-8), no doubt consciously evoking Jane Austen's Mrs. Bennett. In his study of the English realistic novel, I. Williams' historical placement of Jane Austen's art is that she is:

... a 'classical' novelist, reposing on the certainties of the eighteenth century world, [who] is able to embody aspects of modern experience which had never been presented in the novel before, and which were to form the material of the later nineteenth century novel, though moulded under forces and influences of which she had no conception. (Williams 1974:24)

This is a just and representative view of Austen and Lawrence is a thoroughly self-conscious later heir to this process, taking it still further. See Bell's (1997:97) comment, cited above about Lawrence's struggle with the realistic novel.

This opening conversation is sign-posted in a very different world from that of *Pride and Prejudice*. F.R. Leavis (1976:64) writes of an ensuing 'embarrassed silence'. Allen Ingram (1990:111) in a later reading (of the same opening passage) refers to 'The growing irritation within the scene [which] arises from each sister's alertness to the mood of the other ...' Both (representative) critics highlight *tension* where the real fear of entrapment is allied to one of sceptical, fundamental questioning in which there is a kind of convergence, an uneasy and, as it turns out, strictly temporary, alliance in the quest for something more, for novelty. The echoes of Jane Austen

provide a quiet definer of contrast in the novel. She is explicitly mentioned as a period-reference in the 'Diver' chapter referred to above and her world is explicitly rejected (or, better, reluctantly given away as a past artefact) in 'A Chair'. (*WL* 354-63) Notice Birkin's paring: 'My beloved country - it had something to express even when it made that chair [...] I think of England, even Jane Austen's England -' (*WL* 355) Here in strikingly well integrated symbolism, a once-fine but awkwardly re-fitted item of furniture in a jumble sale is a still vital reminiscence for Birkin of an expressive, happier past, 'the old bones of beauty' in the 'sordid and foul mechanicalness of the present.' (*WL* 356).¹⁹

Birkin and Ursula, amorously quarrelsome wilful couple and newly engaged, first buy the chair and then give it away to a socially contrasting, rather Dostoyevskian underground pair from the 'common people', also engaged and necessarily setting up home, trapped through pregnancy into imminent union. Birkin again feels the nostalgia of the 'snare' of the past, (as at Breadalby: *WL* 97) but the pull in him is towards ongoing motion and rootlessness. Ursula by contrast and in clearer focus wants only first to throw and then to give the chair away. The contrast between two couples here is also important. The *homemakers* are the Dostoyevskian 'underground', urban and blighted poor with their innate vividly realised dignity and humour, their investment in a located future through the child that she carries, whilst the clearly differentiated 'superior' couple wish to disinherit themselves of home, profession, property and country, to be off, 'be married and have done with them'.

"We've got to live in the chinks they leave us." (*WL* 361) The tenor of Birkin's comment is parasitic and strange but there is breadth of ironic self-critique and cultural range throughout this novel that the casual reader may miss. Consciously or not, Birkin/Lawrence here echoes the sentiment of a very famous line in nineteenth-century French literature:

Vivre? Les serviteurs feront cela pour nous!

[Villiers de l'Isle Adam, from *Axël*, cited by Starkie (1960: 90)]

The line comes from a late nineteenth century (proto-Gnostic) romance text based on sacrifice for the ideal. A writer deeply influenced by Baudelaire and by Wagner, Villiers de l'Isle Adam's (1840-89) personal and authorial stance was 'disgust with the material world, and interest only in the ideal beyond this life.' (Starkie 1960: 89) That complex aesthete, W.B. Yeats, liked to recite this cited line and the text was a large and decisive influence on French Symbolism. Baudelaire, if not Villiers de l'Isle Adam, figured strongly in Lawrence's formative reading (Worthen 1991: 62, 326) and Lawrence had also in the two main drafts of what was finally called *The Trespasser* (1910 and 1912) worked through, struggled with and finally transcended an over-literary Wagnerian mode and theme. Lawrence first engaged with Nietzsche and with Wagner at the time of the first draft of this text, his second novel, and his failed courtship with Helen Corke, herself a reader of Nietzsche, is the inspiration for its writing. The final draft of *The Trespasser*, a work Lawrence came to dislike, shows him utilising, mastering and transcending an already outmoded literary *genre* and one not suited to his genius. But the experience and insights arising out of that

¹⁹ See Lawrence's poem (*TCP* 448) 'Things Men Have Made - ', the tenor of which denotes that Birkin at this point in the novel is expressing an author-owned insight.

composition inform and are multiply critiqued in the modes of understanding Ursula and Birkin, as a couple on the borderlands of the aesthetic, that Lawrence employed in *Women In Love*.

Birkin and Ursula see their impending marriage as romantic elopement but grounded in pledge, true marriage but without that fixity of community (and thus accountability) in which traditionally the union is situated. This is some way away from the social and materialistic 'Jane Austen' match-making criteria just as the distinctive substance and tone of the concluding discussion in Lawrence's chapter distances it finally from any other later nineteenth-century 'lovers' project'. Here is one of several spirited exchanges between Birkin/prophet and Ursula responsively independent foil and critic, pliant, affective and, suddenly *there*. 'She was rebelling against something else.' (*WL* 356) The 'rows' and lesser irritabilities between Ursula and Birkin are one of Lawrence's own species of 'dialectical undercutting' in this novel, conveying a peculiar energy to his lovers' dialogue, exploratory and humorous by turns or even in conjunction. Thus at the end of this chapter, the couple debate the unresolved need for others, perhaps even/only Gerald and Gudrun, in a tonally complex exchange, the dominant of which is a clearly a late version of Romantic Utopianism. But the bleak unresolved question at the novel's close is here given a prescient airing when Birkin and Ursula each rehearse the stances that they must finally exemplify and when, of course, the cross partnership remains an option no more.

A nuanced Kierkegaardian critique of this begins with *Either/Or* II, where, as we noted in chapter one, Judge William/Kierkegaard grounds the Ethical life in a nominally *religious* context. But the appended Jutland Pastor's prayer at the end of the text (*EO II* 342) ironically undermines the self-satisfied seeming impregnability of the Judge's position implying a skewed exaggeration of the unaided potentialities of the human. Candidly, throughout this text, Judge William is urging self-help out of despair on his younger, aesthetic friend, and his God is an adjunct to this fortuitously and essentially human (or perhaps Pelagian) project. In his own summary conspectus Kierkegaard makes the decisive anti-Stoical point, one, incidentally that the secular derivatives of his thought (Heidegger, Sartre) later disallowed:

The discrepancy is that the ethical self is supposed to be found immanently in despair, that by enduring the despair the individual would win himself. [...] In despairing, I use myself to despair and therefore I can indeed despair of everything by myself, but if I do this I cannot come back by myself. It is in this moment of decision that the individual needs divine assistance, although it is quite correct that one must first have understood the existence-relation between the esthetic and the ethical in order to be at this point – that is, by being there in passion and inwardness, one indeed becomes aware of the religious – and of the *leap*. (*CUP* 258)

Now the *leap* towards each other that Birkin and Ursula make is not born out of despair (though deep crisis preceded it in the case of Birkin) and it *is* true commitment, although their deracinated marriage-project, requiring a further 'leap' out of the social, cuts across the major criteria of Judge William, in its lacking of communitarian accountability. It does not ostensibly permit the inclusion of a Kierkegaardian *religious* awareness either: salvation through bonding and

separateness in union is the hope, 'the perfection of the polarised sex-circuit' (not one of Lawrence's happier phrases). Their relationship is always to be contrasted with that of Gerald and Gudrun at multiple levels in the novel.

Contrast the episode in Chapter XVIII, entitled 'Rabbit' - species only - though the animal is named in the text (appropriately 'Bismarck', pet of Winifred Crich) with the earlier chapter XIII, 'Mino': pet cat's *name* as title. Here Lawrence provided a parallel contrasting passage to Chapter XVIII, one of multiple richness of affect that is dialogically tender, observant and not predatory, humanly conflictual but in humorous mode. The movement of the chapter is situated and motivated within the context of a closely and comically observed encounter between two very different cats, fully realised and distinguished in the text. Out of this setting, Birkin and Ursula negotiate their unfolding relationship with a determination to risk, to seek equipoise and union beyond anything conceivable by the Judge or by Gerald.²⁰ Importantly in 'Mino', Ursula tells Birkin about her relationship with Skrebensky. This is a rare flashback to the quite dissimilar preceding novel, but he was 'her first love [...] And he [Birkin] seemed to listen with reverence.' (*WL* 153) This is human, affective and supposedly non-ironic. In the perception of these protagonists the two cats are anthropocentrically viewed. But the interplay between the cats is a counter-comment on the human interplay and a signal to the reader of its unconscious complexity and ambivalence, to which the human dialogue adds its own pointedly uncertain, intricately rhythmical qualification:

"Yes,-my love, yes,-my love. Let love be enough then.-I love you then-I love you. I'm bored by the rest."

"Yes," she murmured, nestling very sweet and close to him. (*WL* 134)

Note the author-control of Birkin's speech and how we are firmly directed in reading it. But is this repetition-statement mock-passionate and languid or stirringly passionate after great convalescent fatigue? Is it both? There *is* a Dandy lurking in Birkin. And who is in charge? Ursula's dialogical response here is one monosyllable and it is followed by action that is described ostensibly in the language of popular romantic fiction but with a rhythmic charge seldom found in that genre. She is, in fact, cat-like. Some of these features entail in the presentation of Bismarck in Chapter XVIII but the intrusion of real violence there makes the contrast: it is quite uncushioned and also revelatory.

Although Raymond Williams in a still-important study, already noted, (Williams 1960: 134-5) regarded both couples as basically alike 'in their rejection of humanity itself', he chooses to miss the desperately confined level of inter-human investigation which is at the heart of Lawrence's prophetic project in this novel. This is the experience of the wrath of a God 'who can do without man', (*WL* 478) an intricately orchestrated artistic reflection on lostness, on death and on the uncertain risky possibility of escape and rebirth. In the prolonged season in hell that ensues, the gradations of stance, Hermione, Gerald, Ursula, Loerke etc., are crucial and essentially Kierkegaardian. In a sense they are all that there is. See the process of Gudrun's complex introspection in *WL* 417-9. Note too the carefully plotted recognition of her true state by Loerke at the commencement of the climactic

²⁰ *WL* 144-54.

sequence, which is exposed (*WL* 426) in a defining moment for three characters. The sub-ethical and actually covert aesthete, Gerald Crich, unaware of himself and thus fatally athwart the reality of his true being, cannot finally endure despair, questioning and not calling on the divine mercy, a submerged image of which passes before his vision (*WL* 473) as he stumbles towards final closure. At least Ursula and Birkin go on.

In *Women In Love* there is an intricate dialectical tension between critique and allure that is exemplified differently and fluidly in each of the four major characters though here the focus is on Gerald contrasted with Birkin. Hermione's Breadalby represents, dangerously, for Birkin, the 'lovely accomplished past' but, within the narrative, he is soon self-exiled from it through his jilted lover's act of murderous but inept violence, seeking healing in nature, moving on life-wards.²¹ For Gerald, slayer of the brother, and very differently isolate, the allure of everything is more truly Nietzschean, darker and colder, and Gudrun, slayer of the husband,²² the respondent and object (deliberate wording) of his focus becomes, because of his exploitative perception, entrapment and usage of her, his predator. There is combat, resulting in Gudrun's near-pyrrhic victory, a spiritual vanquishing analogous to that of Ursula's over Skrebensky in *The Rainbow*, after which she takes on the implied enchanted role of victim, ripe for Loerke.²³

In all this the Aesthetic category of motivation and its Kierkegaardian corollary of self-stultifying pursuit are dominant for all three characters.²⁴ Amy Laura Hall in her recent close reading has shown how Judge William's wife in *Either/Or II* is portrayed from within a Buberian I/It relation, unwittingly through his words alone.²⁵ The wife is not a *Thou* in her own right because of his self-gratifying projection. Rather, through the impulsion of his quietly devouring gaze, his exploitative projection and controlling routines, she is a "curtailed 'I'".²⁶ In his complacently bourgeois marital idealisation, the Aesthetic category is the actual control behind the Judge's Ethical façade. But the true 'Spherical' status of this Kierkegaardian pseudonym is more gently exposed than Lawrence's multiply layered presentation of the aggressive Gerald, who, diminished in death, resembles for Birkin the corpse of a frozen rabbit, the very animal he had earlier humiliated.²⁷

5. *Women In Love* - Relationship and Death.

In the end the man Gerald becomes reified: a stiff thing, the image and type of the Buberian *It* that has been, for the most part, his objectified vision of all that is Other to

²¹ See *WL* 97; 104-9 together with the illuminating comments of Vickery (1973: 319-20).

²² See *WL* 26 and 539, note 7: 1.

²³ For Ursula and Skrebensky see *R* 443-7. Gudrun is of course only a shadowy presence in the earlier novel. Note the matching imagery with Gerald's actual fate of: 'the cold devil of irony that froze her [Gudrun's] soul.' (*WL* 476) and contrast with Ursula's flowing tears, halted, and the final: 'Gudrun went to Dresden. She wrote no particulars of herself.' (*WL* 481)

²⁴ Leavis (1976: 73-7) and Bell (1992: 128-9) have made something like this point though without reference to Kierkegaard.

²⁵ See Hall (2002: 108-138). She reads selected aesthetic texts of Kierkegaard through the lens of *Works of Love*. See also Buber (1958: 15-16), to whom Hall does not refer.

²⁶ *J* 248.

²⁷ *WL* 477: 'dead male' (species indistinct) to 'dead rabbit' is instructive. The earlier passage is *WL* 239-243

his ego. Some moments with Birkin and with Gudrun show glimpses of vulnerability, perhaps of hesitancy over the basic thrust of his life, but Gerald is trapped, dehumanised by a fundamental ‘made’ choice of direction from within himself.²⁸ There is no record of any equivalent to a Kierkegaardian Gilleleie moment and, uselessly and fatally, he decided the ‘externals’ before the ‘fundamentals’. The ‘harmony of centrifugal and centripetal forces [did not] realise his existence’. (*EK* 9-10) He is first viewed as predatory, lupine rather than like a rabbit.²⁹ The signs of his inner immersion in the ‘destructive element’ take still clearer form in the novel’s ‘public domain’ as the fractured narrative unfolds until, an unformed subject, a “curtailed ‘I’”, a mythic embodiment, he dies a mythic death. His world-bestridding, post-altruistic confidence conceals a (human) being as ‘lost’ as do the padlocked, pseudo-ethical certitudes of the Judge. More coats of authorial paint have been applied to the differently figured and dimensioned pseudonym and that is all.

My studied preference for the descriptor ‘Late Modernity’ for the last 40-odd years of our culture owes much to the exemplary thought of Kierkegaard and of Nietzsche. David Harvey’s influential study of the Postmodernism/Late Modernism phenomenon summarises the centrality and accuracy of Nietzsche’s critique, agreeing broadly with Bell (1997). But he also stresses the ambivalence and danger of Nietzsche’s cumulative potentiating insight, a suspension of the ethical from within a totalised aesthetic and without teleology (Harvey 1990: 15-20; 273-4). Gerald Crich existed in the first frame and the third frame, through his life of self-exerted dominance, but he was actually destroyed by the middle frame, symbolised in his loss of Gudrun to Loerke, who are indeed the true ‘midnightly’³⁰ ones and whose perverse spirituality and different *level* of (not capacity for) violence in fact defeats his physical attack (*WL* 470-2).³¹ Gerald goes on to die, naming or questioning. In fear, on his last crazed run, he ‘sheered away’ from the ‘half-buried crucifix’, the ‘little Christ’, so diminished in this text and in the faithfully reproduced disintegrating world that it accentuates. The account of his end, to which I referred in the preceding chapter and which I propose now to re-visit, is intimate third-person; author inside-the -head:

He was bound to be murdered, he could see it. This was the moment when the death was uplifted and there was no escape.

Lord Jesus, was it then bound to be—Lord Jesus? He could feel the blow descending, he knew he was murdered. (*WL* 474)

Hands raised in bodily fear he stumbles on

²⁸ Buber (1958: 15-16). For Gerald’s ‘moments’ see, for example, *WL* 268 and *WL* 344.

²⁹ See *WL* 14, 239-243. The latter passage is a remarkable presentation of the interaction between Gerald and Gudrun mediated by the rabbit to which both are kin. Compare also Gerald’s earlier animal/machine dominance of the horse in front of the train (‘water ... hot iron ... magnetically’) with the ensuing effect on Gudrun and her physical/sexual interaction with the labouring underworld (*WL* 110-18). Lawrence of course presents these two characters with much more than just these kinds of associations, though they are definitive for each in his fictive method here. We are never dealing with anyone less than human in Gerald and Gudrun, at least in their potential, and their characterisation operates multiply in its affect in order to achieve this.

³⁰ Nietzsche cited in Harvey, reference above.

³¹ See also *WL* 170-1 where Gudrun slaps Gerald for the first time, with the back of her hand: ‘You have struck the first blow,’ [...] ‘And I shall strike the last.’

... he wandered on unconsciously, till he slipped and fell down, and as he fell something broke in his soul, and immediately he went to sleep. (*WL* 475)

Why 'murdered'? For this read 'sacrificed', even, perversely 'martyred'. But for what and in what conscious sense? In *Murder in the Cathedral* Eliot's Becket describes 'the true martyr [as ...] he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself...' (*CPP* 261) No will of Gerald's is given over to God here, rather this is the finally explicit brokenness in his soul, the deflation of his *Wille zur Macht*: he has 'lost his will' in nothing. '... he went to sleep ...' Howbeit, there *is* an uncanny parodic (but not mocking) resemblance to martyrological literature here and I note the following classic features. There is the sense of self-destiny both in inflicted death, 'murdered', but not yet unconscious and therefore *known* as a still-impending experience that is already completed for the subject³² and in 'Lord Jesus' as recognised ultimatum. Why *Lord*? Is some 'mastery' acknowledged (*My Lord and my God*) or 'pattern' of life believed in some way to have been followed? *Imitatio Christi*? Or even childhood recollection: *Little Lord Jesus*? But if this is not blasphemy it is still open to the objection of a broken will rather than a will lost in God. Whatever we may conclude here, both – murder and met Lord – are, manifest in the text, 'bound to be'. There is an agnostically questioned providence here in the idiosyncratic hasty dash-pause (*was it then bound to be-Lord Jesus?*) but the agnosticism does not finally subvert. What *is* conveyed is a perilous and pathetic innocence - which brings us back to *victim* again. And bathos: '... he went to sleep ...'

Another 'classic' feature of the text in this family resemblance, to which I allude, is its scriptural moulding. As so often in Lawrence, there is scriptural intertextuality here. I refer this passage to the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 7.54-60 (to which Eliot's Becket sermon alludes), and to John 12.31-6, anticipating Jesus' own death and its meaning (both in the King James Version familiar to Lawrence at that time). In the Acts passage, his accusers kill Stephen the proto-martyr and seeing Jesus and calling upon God, he fell to the ground and 'fell asleep.' (7.60) Then come Lawrence's Gerald-words:

'This was the moment when death was uplifted and there was no escape.'
(*WL* 474) This is followed immediately by 'Lord Jesus'.

These should be compared with Jesus' words in John 13.32-3:

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he was to die.

These are not parallel in detail. Gerald is neither accused nor killed (though he believes he is). His frightened or resigned words are not a 'calling upon God' in the 'believing' sense. He 'sees' a replica Christ, a replica of Christ uplifted on the cross,

³² A year after the publication of *Women In Love*, in 1921, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1961: 146-7, [6.4311]) wrote: 'Der Tod ist kein Ereignis des Lebens. Den Tod erlebt man nicht.' ('Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death.') How did he know? D.H. Lawrence, for one, experienced this in his life, anticipatively, more than most people. SK cites a similar observation from Epicurus (342/1-271/70 BCE) twice. In *PF* 95 he describes it as 'scant comfort'; in *JC* 147 he calls it 'sophistical'.

half submerged in snow while Stephen sees Jesus at God's right hand in heaven. Both fall (one under impact of lethal violence and one because of a broken centre in his being) to the ground and then 'asleep'. (But Gerald 'went' and Stephen 'fell'.) Gerald espies a crucifix on the way - drawn? - to his death. This is his indeed his 'last low whisper' but what does it mean? In his discussion of *The Rainbow* Poplawski has made a critical point about Lawrence's use of scripture to which I have already referred and that I find to be illuminating in a wider variety of contexts:

Christian terminology is not integrated within the consciousness of the characters, *certainly not in Gerald's*, but is usually added after particular experiences as a part of narratorial comment that helps to define the experience as religious. (Poplawski 1993: 90; italics mine)

In some unfathomable sense it is Gerald's choice to die. He 'went'. This scene is, however, an exception as the first part of Poplawski's principle is not applicable here because it *is* 'within Gerald's consciousness', albeit *not* integrated, that the words to/about Christ are formed. How then is his death 'religious'? Is it like Nietzsche's final acknowledgement (if it was that) of 'the Crucified'? The logic of Gerald's presented character and symbolism, as I have traced them, foreclose any interpretation close to the meanings given to the deaths of Becket and of Stephen and nor does the historical Nietzsche afford any resemblance whatsoever to the fictional Gerald. My conclusion is that Gerald is mythically sacrificed in the cold element and (here) nihilistic spirit of the Nordic pre-Christian gods for whom destruction is sport. Gerald and (more) Gudrun and (still more) Loerke are *aesthetically* of this spirit (of sport), though not masters of it. Birkin is distinct from this grouping because, amongst other considerations, for him, the death means the loss of someone he could have loved: a *Thou*. But Gerald has surrendered that in himself and become captive to necessity. Kierkegaard, psychologist of the inner dialectic of faith, illuminates the plight:

Personhood is a synthesis of possibility and necessity. Its continued existence is like breathing (*respiration*), which is an inhaling and exhaling. The self of the determinist cannot breathe, for it is impossible to breathe necessity exclusively, because that would utterly suffocate a person's self. The fatalist is in despair, has lost God and thus his self, for he who does not have a God does not have a self, either. But the fatalist has no God, or, what amounts to the same thing, his God is necessity [...] the fatalist's worship of God is at most an interjection [...] a mute capitulation: he is unable to pray. To pray is also to breathe, and possibility is for the self what oxygen is for breathing [...] That God's will is the possible makes me able to pray; if there is nothing but necessity, man is essentially as inarticulate as the animals. (*SUD* 40-1)

The religious language of the victim restores an element of Aristotelian pity to the bleakness of the end of Gerald Crich, but it does not succeed in balancing the dominance of the fear: 'a mute capitulation: he is unable to pray'. The snow almost occludes the Christ that Gerald swerves to avoid.³³

³³ The image of Crucifixes in the snow was important to Lawrence in his travel writing and, interestingly, in a wonderfully open and disturbing poem, 'Meeting Among the Mountains', (*TCP* 224-6) in which Lawrence fascinated by a sculptured dead Christ in the mountain snow, meets the eyes of a passing cart-driver and unbidden recalls the eyes of Christ and, superimposed, the eyes of Ernest Weekley. Shame, hate, accusation, wounding and despair (in Lawrence himself) are articulated and

present here. Never let it be said that Lawrence lacked deep conscience! Kinkead-Weekes (1996: 360-1) contextualises and dates the poem in the summer of 1912.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Late Texts and Readings: Lawrence *contra* Eliot.

1. Background.

Postmodernism or Late Modernism represent a shift beyond *The Waste Land* only in two categories – the decisive absence of *Shantih* and its location then within a less developed technological universe, although the potential for this growth, too, is latent. What is now known of Ezra Pound's major surgical editing (see *WLF*) only serves to emphasise the extent of this remarkable text's resemblance to *bricolage*, shored fragments, cut and paste – with momentary universal impact 'under the wire'. The shoots (out of the dead land) of all the rest of the main and often-noted features of Postmodernity are there: high/low culture intertext, scepticism towards meta-narratives, elision of the possessed self and fragmentation of polyglot past recall, unfertile sexuality and the un-reachable other, even the seedier side of market forces (in the person of the Smyrna merchant).

The similar case for *Women In Love* is less obvious but it can be made. This text free-floats in 'indistinct' time. It first subverts and then re-presents marriage, in truncated chastened and self-absorbed form. The rite as a goal is interrogated, satirised even, in the opening sequences. Then it is re-collected and re-found by Ursula and Birkin, as precariously isolated *Egoïsme à deux* but still as a kind of joint 'last romantic' venture, a very lonely, even forlorn paring at the novel's close. This same theme of marriage is counterfeited by Gerald, abetted by Gudrun and detected and exposed by Loerke/Loki, slayer of the young god.¹ There are also the key moments in this mythic-apocalyptic-naturalistic fiction when Jane Austen is (implicitly or explicitly) present as what I have termed 'a quiet definer of contrast'² and Kierkegaard via Judge William on marriage may be invited to play, as I have argued, a similar, doubly ironic role.

2. Prospect and Retrospect: Preamble to Comparison of Late Writings.

This fictional praxis of imagery in Lawrence requires the deployment of complex memory – anamnesis/repetition – that can indeed subvert and at times console. *Reculer pour mieux sauter*. I find this an analogous technique impressively and frequently in later Eliot, but sometimes too deliberately, and prone to a kind of self-canonization so that creative subversion becomes muted – a strange but real weakness within work of such linguistic and rhythmic refinement and discipline. Lawrence is much more uneven but the process is often strong, idiosyncratic and compelling in his work, impelling subversion against consolation, which is refused, – and leading, as I shall show, to what finally becomes a reluctant and still more a triumphant acquiescence. Another early Journal entry from Kierkegaard (in 1843) is relevant to an important Eliot/Lawrence contrast in pace and in orientation:

¹ See *WL* 289-91 and *WL* 553, note 505: 21.

² Implicitly present in *WL* 7-8; explicitly (with Dorothy Wordsworth {?}) in *WL* 48; explicitly, alone, in *WL* 355.

Philosophy is perfectly right in saying that life must be understood backward. But then one forgets the other clause – that it must be lived forward. The more one thinks through this clause, the more one concludes that life in temporality never becomes properly understandable, simply because never at any time does one get perfect repose to take a stance – backward. (*EK* 12).

There is more retrospect in Eliot than in Lawrence or, better, the Lawrencian act of retrospect is imaged and transmitted quite differently, on a broader biographic/imaginary scale, and is thus easy to miss. Lawrence is novelistic in his poem-sequences but that does not mean that his poetry is secondary in value to his novels, although it remains a minority view to believe this.³ Eliot's imperatives of progression in *Four Quartets* are deliberate and explicit:

But fare forward .. (*CPP* 188)

Here and there does not matter
We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity ... (*CPP* 183)

They are often courageously asserted in 'unpropitious' historical and spiritual contexts, whereas Lawrence's, similarly asserted, are impatiently vital.

We shall not look before and after.
We shall *be, now*. (*TCP* 268)

It is pertinent that Lawrence in 1917 was much younger than Eliot in 1940-1 but given the temperamentally oppositional nature of these two men I do not think that this is a decisive refutation of the point that I am making.⁴ Either way, here and there (and now) *does* matter – very much. It has to be said that the *Four Quartets* without location would be inconceivable, but *locus* is invariably a vehicle for rumination in the poems and term-shifts are easily overlooked.

Professor Christopher Rowland, New Testament scholar, remarked to me informally in 1996 that he found little sense of the dynamism of the Holy Spirit in *Four Quartets*, notwithstanding 'the dove descending'. The comment is not to be taken too strictly but my memory of it has stuck. In these texts Eliot grounds meaning in the flux of

³ Stephen Spender (Spender 1951) recalled Eliot's describing the poetry of Hardy as novelistic, implying a lack of true commitment to the distinctive genre. Eliot's point may be valid in terms of his own serious and accomplished poetic but it is inappropriate and unjust to the wider ranges and to the achievement of a Hardy or a Lawrence (or a Whitman). Historically Leavis' important and influential intervention in 1955 (Leavis 1964a: 17-22) privileged the achievement of Lawrence's novels and in support adduced the formal dominance of fictional prose in the last two centuries of English literature, perhaps partly as a counter-riposte to Eliot's influence. The trend, with variations, continues to be dominant and Widdowson (1992: 7-8) is a representative later example. However Laird (1988: 238-40) made a spirited and convincing case for a greater appreciation of Lawrence as poet equal to novelist and the opening chapter in Gilbert (1990: 1-10) helpfully addressed the problems of an effective reception of Lawrence's poetry and of the distinctive challenges presented. Montgomery (1994: 218-30) sympathetically considered the aesthetic, philosophical and Romantic differences in Lawrence with the approach and understanding of Eliot.

⁴ It is difficult to envisage Lawrence, Phoenix, 'renewing her youth like the eagle', (*TCP* 728) in the final text printed in his *Last Poems*, as an 'aged eagle', (*CPP* 89) as Eliot, aged 42, so described himself in *Ash Wednesday* in 1930, the year that Lawrence died aged 45.

time through the presence of Incarnation as a decisive act, fitfully refracted to and experienced by us, characteristically as intersection in *place*, but with increasing assurance as the illusions of varying states of false consciousness, some painful, fall away. This is a stoical and chastening process and I identify with Donaghue's observation (1965: 234) that 'the parts of the poem which I tend to carry in my mind are those in which the religious feeling is willingly grounded in place and time, in a human situation of certified value.'⁵ The poem's insistent *via negativa* remotes the human (but not the place) and Donaghue's personal regret that the poems are not more 'Franciscan', although understandable, is to wish them different from the poems that we have. He correctly identifies (1965: 232) Manichean tendencies that may create a poetry that often seems 'too imperiously above redemption.' (234) An essential balanced insight is surely captured in Peter Levi's remarkable elegy on the death of Eliot, 'New Year's Eve Poem 1965', where the poet brackets Eliot with Dante but still contrives to combine admiration and personal humility with implied disquiet, simple, distilled and straight, about his subject:

No one has spoken as clearly as they did
Or in such austere words of poetry:
The angel of language is visible,
The fire stands in the air above the tree.

Heaven is intellectual, to feel
At home there goes beyond man and woman:
And I have never dreamed of such a thing.
When Eliot died, it made him seem human. (Levi 1971: 38)⁶

At least, we might say, he had *that* in common with the rest of us, noting the very high praise.

In *Four Quartets* there is a Kierkegaardian concern to rehabilitate the life and thus the language of faith and this also informs and impels the minimalism of the religious language within the text. It is Kierkegaard's project of defamiliarisation: how, in fact, to be a Christian in Christendom? Eliot had expressed his views on this earlier:

It is hard for those who have never known persecution,
And who have never known a Christian
To believe these tales of Christian persecution. (CPP 159)

Tinsley (1979: 410) is right in his reading of Eliot's move away from the near-propagandist tone of *The Rock* (1934), from which the quotation above is taken, to the use of the techniques of allusive indirection but he makes a direct derivative connection with Kierkegaard for which the evidence to date is still more conjectural than clear. Deeply illuminating convergence (my thesis) does not require direct manifest influence and Mrs. Valerie Eliot's letter to me about Kierkegaard in 1994

⁵ This 'grounding' can also happen in Eliot by literary/scriptural/historical associational imagery. See my earlier discussion of the background to the 'Word in the desert' in *Burnt Norton V* in Chapter Five above.

⁶ Peter Levi, 1931-2000, was poet, scholar, ex-Jesuit of Jewish descent and exemplar of humane letters. He wrote and translated in a variety of fields and genres – some thought too widely. I regard his poem on Eliot, which I heard him read, as outstanding.

(see *Appendix B*) is an important document in this regard. Murray's fine book on Eliot and Mysticism (Murray 1991) is a study of value for the deeper understanding of *Four Quartets* but I regard his Chapter 7, 'Mysticism Under Scrutiny: The Influence of Søren Kierkegaard', (Murray 1991: 103-24) as one of the least satisfactory parts of his argument. He is careful to limit his assertions (108, 123) about the certainty of any direct influence of author on author although he has discovered an unpublished text (110) and an important anecdote (115) associating Eliot, albeit only slightly, with SK. I believe despite his qualifying endnote on the matter (281, note 28) that Murray does not read Kierkegaard's pseudonyms (here Judge William) with sufficient tonal discrimination. The Judge certainly does *not* speak for SK, as I have elsewhere shown. I am confident, for a variety of reasons that my studies have uncovered, that Kierkegaard was personally familiar with the contemplative journey of prayer, sometimes loosely generalised as 'mystical'. But he would necessarily be cautious (practising the virtue of 'discretion', in the catholic sense, in wary contrast to Heiberg and to Adler and other wonted illuminists), and perhaps unable to find sensibly appropriate terms for this in the milieu of his religious culture, time and place. For these reasons, too, I believe that the evidence of the Journal entry cited by Murray is not decisive either.

Finally unlike some other critics I have not found a falling-off in the poetry and thematic grasp in Eliot's third *Quartet*, *The Dry Salvages*, a negative view important to Murray's case here. The poem is actually a favourite of mine and I find its evocation of landscape, shore and weather, together with its actualised poetry of mutability and attendant uncertainty, its genuine respect for the real and timeless working poor and their abiding human dignity, to be convincing, impressive and none to common in Eliot. Compare his 'forever bailing' fishermen in this poem and their anxious or mourning women with the subhuman 'daunsinge', mock-Hardyean peasants of *East Coker*. *Dry Salvages* as a poem convincingly insinuates Incarnation as 'gift' into a smellable, tactile, yearning, humanly finite and audible world. Its companion poems are really no match for it on this particular score and its Christian tone is mature and grounded, anticipating *Little Gidding*, but it is nowhere explicitly anti-mystical.⁷ It is more sceptical of illicit 'consolation':

Not fare well
But fare forward, voyagers. (*CPP* 188)

But the wisest traditions of mystical prayer have always counselled such an attitude. The long paragraph in Section II of *East Coker* (*CPP* 179) contains most of the features of the chastened awareness of the succeeding *Quartet* but these are there conveyed more mythically and abstractly. The concluding lines of this passage, akin to *Dry Salvages* in mood if not in register, are as fine in their fusion of sound and sense emergent from context as anything that Eliot wrote:

⁷ For the anticipation, see the third verse of the Sestina in Section II, (*CPP* 186) which looks forward to the substance of the encounter with the 'familiar compound ghost' in the last *Quartet*. Despite the 'compound' there have been individual identities proffered for this memorable presence. Gardner (1978: 171-196) establishes the Dantean textual model and the Florentine poet clearly is a major constituent of the *persona*. Yeats also seems to be present and Gardner (1978: 185) rightly conjectures this, with evidences. She also argues convincingly for a degree of self-address. F.R. Leavis, in 1970, claimed for himself the personal possibility of a participant role (via the spoken word) but I am not aware that his candidature was widely endorsed.

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.

This is a sentiment with which late Lawrence came to agree in his quite differently remarkable later work to which I now turn.

3. Lawrence: the *Chatterleys* and *the Escaped Cock*.

I believe that in some of his last writings Lawrence achieved a purity of religious diction that is rare in our language.⁸ I have studied the *Lady Chatterley* versions and some of the intense earlier and later debate surrounding that novel in its two earlier editions and in its final form.⁹ It is now possible to see more of the positive intentions and generic complexities of Lawrence's novel, both of what he was trying to achieve and what necessarily he failed to achieve. Loneliness, lust, erotic love, chastity, social hatred and puritan preaching all have their proportioning place within the tale, which combines late-romantic escapist remedy (we twain against the world) with pastoral idyll, folk coarseness *and* discrimination, integrated with a quasi-Dickensian attack on mercantile culture and gentrified decadence. It cannot 'convince' as realistic novel and the mythic balance is not sustained as in *The Rainbow*. It is not an example that I propose to consider because the language sinks beneath the weight of what it is required to convey. It is perhaps the most famously influential failure in serious English fiction.

In *The Escaped Cock* and *Apocalypse*, Lawrence's other very late prose-works, religious interest is clearly paramount and idiosyncratically Lawrencian. Both texts engage directly and idiosyncratically with the New Testament. The gospels are present, as selective background in the first, the tale, and a de-centred re-writing of *Revelation* constitutes the second, the inspired sermon. Lawrence has returned here to the scriptural sources of his earliest formation (and rebellion). The re-emergence of dominant biblical symbols is more marked in Lawrence's later works than ever before (with the exception of *The Rainbow*) and this does amount to a large-scale Kierkegaardian (literary and personal) Repetition. He could never free himself from the great biblical themes, allusions, rhythms and images: in fact his work would be inconceivable without these. He acknowledged this perceptively and in hapless protest at the end of his life in words already cited in the second chapter of my thesis. They bear repeating here:

From earliest years right into manhood, like any other nonconformist child I had the Bible poured every day into my helpless consciousness, till there came almost a saturation point. Long before one could even think or even vaguely

⁸ The echo of an earlier critical work, Davie (1952), is deliberate but what Lawrence did with language is different to the Augustan concerns of that text and I use 'purity' with a Kierkegaardian moral/religious as well as literary connotation.

⁹ The texts *FLC*; *FLSC*; *JTLJ*; *LCL*; *LCLa* and their respective apparatus should be consulted. James (1987) is helpful about the 1960's religious reception in England and Rolph (1961) records the trial against Penguin books in 1960. Millett (1969) is a now-superseded but highly influential early feminist response. Britten (1988) gives something of the compositional background prior to Ellis (1998). Among more recent critical discussions I have found Hyde (1990) and, especially, Bell (1991: 208-225) both sensible and insightful.

understand, this Bible language, these 'portions' of the Bible were *douched* over the mind and consciousness, till they became soaked in, they became an influence which affected all the processes of emotion and thought. So that today, although I have 'forgotten' my Bible, I need only to begin to read a chapter to realise that I 'know' it with an almost nauseating fixity. And I must confess, my first reaction is one of dislike, repulsion, and even resentment. My very instincts *resent* the Bible. (A 59)

In an important opening discussion to his valuable, thorough treatment of scripture and Lawrence, Terry Wright (2000: 14-20) outlines an intertextual free-range hermeneutic drawing on the dissentient critical theories of Bakhtin, Bloom and Derrida. This is not to legitimate Lawrence in any formally canonical terms (something he would not have wished) but to locate his practices and approach in a wider cultural setting of a kind more evident and comprehensible now than in the middle of the last century. As Lawrence (above) recognised, the scriptures have a 'long reach' and the post/late-modern mentors adduced by Wright each differently evolve a dialectic of critique and assimilation, recollection and progressive repetition, within what we might call the Judeo-Christian extended family or on its boundaries. The Kierkegaard of *Repetition* and *Fear and Trembling* performed this function in his extra-orthodox readings of Job and of Abraham and indeed each of Wright's three later authorities has seen fit to engage with SK. At the explicit authorial level, however, Kierkegaard stood, albeit prophetically, within a discernible tradition of faith and Lawrence positioned himself beyond the boundary but as an unmistakably distant and awkward relative still.

The Escaped Cock is open to the same kind of literary critique as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.¹⁰ There is not the same concern to reinvigorate Anglo-Saxon terms to convey an important and difficult sub-articulate message, instead, although there is writing of fine delicacy and powerful evocation here, he seeks to fuse myth and religious discourse (probably not distinguishing too much between the two) and the result is a broken-backed fable fiction in two discordant halves that is still syncretistically and humanly unforgettable. Lawrence writes of a Jesus (*incognito* but unmistakable) who is both risen (or returning) and physical. His risen life is, in fact, defiantly and only physical. There is no process of dematerialisation and epiphany in the manner of the post-Easter accounts of, arguably, all four canonical gospels, depending on the understanding of the transmission history of the text of Mark.¹¹ But Lawrence does however present a return from real death, graphically realised¹² and he is re-visiting something of first importance to the orthodox traditions and one about which there is often, understandably enough, agnostic skirting or silence. Put simply this central belief is that if death was not fully experienced (by Christ) then death was not fully defeated and its effects redeemed. Also if Christ was not fully and, in a sense,

¹⁰ It actually comes between versions two and three in composition but it was not published until after Lawrence's death. *The Escaped Cock* was always Lawrence's preferred title but *The Man Who Died*, following *The Man Who Had Died*, was for many years the published title. See CSN 40 and Ellis (1988: 424) who emphasises the religious importance of this late work to Lawrence personally.

¹¹ Any reputable commentary on this Gospel, and many good-quality English Bibles, will detail the basic problems here, which are not likely to be resolved and would have been of little interest to Lawrence. The textual issue is: does the original text of Mark end at 16.8, or at 16.8 plus a two-sentence supplementary 'shorter ending' or after two or three much longer supplementary variants on one of these?

¹² See CSN 556-7. In an important sense Lawrence had *experienced* this himself, since childhood..

evidently raised, then these central doctrinal claims could not be personally apprehended as life-enhancing realities and truths. Finally if this rising did not also embrace and actually embody a new order, opening out into a hitherto inconceivable boundless, then Christ, like Lazarus, would die again. Resuscitation would be the kernel of the message and that would mean decay and repetition – something quite different from resurrection as the New Testament and the ensuing early central traditions understood it to be.¹³

Part of Lawrence's project appears to be a characteristic and healthy refusal of spirit/body split and an intention to divinise (or to restore awareness of divinity to) materiality. He is thus anti-Gnostic and more so, surprisingly, than many orthodox Christians might think, for whom the 'arty' may suggest such leanings.¹⁴ Predictably for Lawrence this healing takes place through heterosexual interaction and intercourse. The preoccupation is carried over from the first two *Lady Chatterley's* but with greater mythic resonance. There should, of course, be no doubt about the potentially restorative power of such redemptive encounters and, of course, T.S. Eliot's early biographers (and many others) attest the release and happiness that his own second marriage brought to him. By all accounts that Lazarus had indeed returned from a form of isolation and death.¹⁵ As for *the Escaped Cock*, Holderness (1999: 315-33) argues persuasively for its continuing value as a literary and religious text, as, more critically, does Fiddes (1999: 170-2) who discerns an *eros/agape* divide and some reluctance, perhaps in a dying man, to abandon the self for the other. The essential formal flaws in the construction of this remarkable tale were carefully considered as long ago as Hough (1956: 246-253) and his discussion of it, also affirming its resonance and felicities, remains extremely valuable. Finally Prichard (1971: 196-7) summarises as effectively as anyone the essential moral flaw in its solipsistic and shocking close, which surely vindicates the reservation of Fiddes (and endorses Raymond Williams' strictures on *Women In Love*, which I noted in my chapter six, footnote 50).

'Christ, of course, was the most prominent figure in Lawrence's religious thinking.' (Wright 2000: 124) Poet on poet was illuminating in my recent discussion of Eliot when I offered Peter Levi's elegy as empathic critique. To Lawrence's *incognito* Christ of this last tale, I counter with two poems by Jack Clemo, who, blind though he was, offered his experience of living among the detritus of the Cornish clay pits

¹³ Variably witnessed to in the New Testament and I cite here only Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.1-28 and 35-58. There are many critical problems involved in these assertions, some perhaps specific to modern people. I am here doing no more than citing a central tradition and adducing the basic primary and canonical textual evidence for these claims. The theme also admits of an enormous further range of meaningful and metaphoric discourse, some from within our earliest sources, and Lawrence has himself arguably extended this in his own work. For one of many more recent discussions of some of these varied concerns see Porter, Hayes, and Tombs (1999). For a recent thorough, strongly composed, and academically conservative consideration of scriptural and early church evidences see Wright (2003).

¹⁴ The Kierkegaardian aesthete undoubtedly has Gnostic leanings but Lawrence who, anecdotally, expressed admiration for Kierkegaard (see Merrild 1938), and who (certainly) wrote *Women In Love*, can never with justice be so designated. For Gnosticism and its theological imperatives for today see the concluding remarks and citations in Gunton (1997: 225-7).

¹⁵ See Gordon (1988: 255-61) and Ackroyd (1985: 321-7). For a serious meditation on the Lazarus persona in Eliot's work see Williams (1994: 124-219). The present Archbishop of Canterbury, himself a published poet, there described Eliot (219) as 'a great preacher of the gospel'.

imaginatively to the Nottingham miner's son.¹⁶ 'The Two Beds (*to D.H. Lawrence*)' (Clemo 1998: 33-4) addresses his subject in the second person:

Could light of my clay have fallen
On your black pit (yet not my light,
But the Light that is not as you supposed;
I tell you, the Man who died
Is not as you supposed), why, then,
Your symbol would have changed, flesh have been known
As clay-bed and not coal-bed, its yield
The patterned cup for the great Marriage-feast ...

It is a counter-assertion of faith. More personal, avowing debt and deep dissent close to aversion/revulsion and in coarse imagery, is 'Tregerthen Shadow (*to D.H. Lawrence*)' (Clemo 1998: 44):

And I felt the chill fear
Lest your end should be mine and a strange god find in me
His way to Isis in her Cornish form, Isis
Of the grit-hard mystery,
Isis of the crag-clotted womb,
And my night-black pit become
A shrine where the unknown god might heal his wounds
In the intimate lapse.

There are kinds of celebration different to Lawrence's avowals. There could be no allowing of anything approaching a verbal gesture of orthodox Christology, given the young Lawrence's rebellion and the tenor of the later man's reading. In this he is decisively distinct from the Kierkegaard of Christological paradox and the Eliot of Andrewesian orthodoxy.

4. Lawrence: *Apocalypse*.

Clemo is nevertheless unjust to Lawrence, and challenged by him, but no believer as evangelically fierce as Clemo could be happy with Lawrence's fictive endeavours to engage with Jesus and Lawrence's further failures to do this in any now-meaningful ways account for many of the flaws in his incomplete comments in *Apocalypse*. In spite of passages of writing as powerful as anything he produced, this is a remote unfinished work and not really meaningful as an acceptable gloss on a primary scripture text that is understood today to be so Christocentric in its intentions. In a popular commentary on *Revelation*, in 1977, Vernon Sproxton wrote:

¹⁶ Jack Clemo, 1916-1994, severely handicapped poet and autobiographer, is described as an 'auto-didact dissenter' in a helpful article by Featherstone and Rylance (1939) that affirms but pulls no punches, and that was afterwards warmly approved by the poet. They situate this isolated would-be sage within a strange but recognizable tradition of discourse. His combination of sensuality and evangelical gospel, intertwined throughout his works by a stolid independence and with an authentic lyric gift, give vein on at least two occasions, to a perceptive counter-poetic reading of Lawrence. *The Escaped Cock* clearly spoke deeply to him. There are many other such address-poems in Clemo, to Bernadette of Lourdes, Billy Sunday, Karl Barth and, yes, even, Kierkegaard, and more.

Lawrence may have been right in saying that *Revelation* was used as a threat in the ranting Methodist Chapels when what was needed was something to 're-establish the living organic connections with the sun, and with the earth, with mankind.' But he was wrong in not realising that this is precisely what *Revelation* does. For, as far as we can see, the one Epistle that John appears to have known is the Epistle to the Colossians which is, above all, a hymn of praise to the cosmic Christ, in whom all things in heaven and earth are gathered together. Christ, as Teilhard de Chardin was always insisting, is the middle term by which man connects with the cosmos, and through which, to those with imagination, such apparently unpromising gifts as the Morning Star open up to exhilarating prospects of man's place in a Creation Restored. (Sproxtton 1977: 37-8)

This rhetorical yet balanced counter-flourish is substantiated by contemporary professional scholarship. See for example, Bauckham (1993: 146) who also notes the anti-Semitic strain behind European 19th and early 20th century readings of this text, thus serving to deny the Jewish roots of the Gospel.¹⁷ Tutored here by Nietzsche Lawrence misread the power inversions at the heart of this essentially liberationist text and he was over-Hellenised in his understanding of the nature of the source-materials. This is strange given my earlier (Chapter Five) argument for Lawrence's essentially Hebraic approach to language. But there is no contradiction because what is under consideration here is Lawrence's use of secondary sources available and sympathetic to his needs. Contemporary scholarship also rejects his over-emphasis on Nietzschean resentment of the rich and powerful as a driving impetus to Christianity in general and to *Revelation* in particular. See Murphy (1998: 366) who refutes Lawrence's contention on explicitly historical and sociological grounds. This is nineteenth century counter-Christendom reading illicitly sourced in antiquity. But having made these severe strictures, it is to be said that Lawrence did offer a critical and imaginative engagement with a sometimes dangerously complex text. (See Wright 2000: 244.)

The contemporary reader now may respond most readily in Lawrence's *Apocalypse* to the exultant celebratory finale of:

We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is a part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea. My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation. In my very own self, I am part of my family. (*A* 149)

Did Lawrence know Thomas Traherne's *First Century* 27 with its own textual echoes of *Revelation* and its curious anticipation of his own exultant writing? I have found no evidence for this at all in my researches and it seems highly unlikely. But there are certainly some correspondences. Here is Traherne, surely inspired by the same sources:

¹⁷ Bauckham (1993: 147-8).

You never Enjoy the World aright, till the Sea it self floweth in your Veins till you are Clothed with the Heavens, and Crowned with the Stars: and perceive your self to be the Sole Heir of the whole World: and more then so, because Men are in it who are evry one Sole Heirs, as well as you. Till you can Sing and Rejoice and Delight in GOD, as Misers do in Gold, and Kings in Scepters, you never enjoy the World. (Traherne 1966: 177)

But Lawrence concludes *his* paean with a Nietzschean (and postmodern?) note of yearning to oblivion in direct sequence from the passage cited overleaf:

There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters. (*A* 149)

Here the correspondences with Traherne break down. His Trinitarian orthodoxy (he was a Christian mystic and Anglican clergyman) is stressed by Professor Philip Sheldrake. (Sheldrake 1998: 187) Sheldrake's declared project is 'to suggest not only the possibility but the necessity of bridging the historic division between love and knowledge in the human approach to God. To affirm that spirituality and theology are related ...' (Sheldrake 1998: xi) Traherne's dates, 1637-74, place him within that epochal English period on which T.S. Eliot focused so much reflection and attention, although Traherne, whose work was not published until 1903, was not one of his mentoring spirits. (See Eliot's summary comment on Traherne in 1930, a 'remarkable curiosity, an isolated specimen.' [*CL/TL* 182, Footnote 59]) Yet Eliot in his time was concerned, albeit austere, with the same matters that scholars like Sheldrake pursue now and so indeed was Kierkegaard in his place and time.¹⁸ Lawrence, who inherited a late form of the post-Reformation divide, that Traherne in part bridged, Kierkegaard intuited and opposed and Eliot sought with pained integrity to cross, lacked the tutored perception of the Trinitarian and Christological link with creation that thus evacuated his *Apocalypse* from any resemblance to the older and no doubt (as I believe) broadly intended meaning of the text itself. In lacking this, something which was not entirely his fault, he missed the personalism that it safeguards and hence his reference to the illusory 'mind' above. He missed its profound counter-critique of overweening power, so remarkably glossed by Simone Weil, in her brilliant cross-reading comparison of the great beast image of society in Plato's *Republic Book VI* and the Beast(s) of *Revelation*.¹⁹ This same bridge-paradoxical perception, though it becomes a far from adequate term, (*apprehension* is better) also would have helped to heal the split in the desired unity that Lawrence so often and so rightly noted between the expression of Christ crucified and the expression of Christ raised.

But Lawrence did travel further and closer towards that purity of perception and diction with which I first signalled this discussion. His religious expression attains its most refined form in his last poems

5. Eliot and Lawrence – Poems of the End.

¹⁸ See *CL/TL* 256-7 and *SUD* 40.

¹⁹ As examined in Squire (1980: 56-60).

It could be said that both Lawrence and Eliot were 'possessed by death' always but so differently. Unlike the aging Yeats, the tension or whatever it was that produced poetry in Eliot lessened in his last years. For Lawrence with much less time this was not so but focus in his poetry is not always maintained and he can become bored or diversely playful. Although both Lawrence and Eliot were great revisers of their work, the discrepancy in volume in their outputs is astonishing. Their attitudes to finality of statement were different and yet both, ceaselessly, worked towards conclusion through repetition, the counterthrust of memory and desire. It seems that Eliot was stronger on the first term, 'memory', and Lawrence wrote more characteristically and probingly out of the ongoing thrust 'desire', lead wherever it may.

Although I simplify somewhat, the characteristics of the approach of Eliot at issue are most easily discerned in *East Coker* Section V (CPP 182-3) and I start with the repetition:

There is only the fight to recover what has been *lost*
And *found* and *lost* again and again ...

In the following paragraph there is 'only the *trying*...' and the sense of collective memory loss. The puzzle of the 'old stones that cannot be deciphered' is too much of a challenge at this point and there is retreat through 'starlight' to 'lamplight' to the 'photograph album' and accessible memory. The approach to 'love' requires a turning away from the 'here and now' and then, as the imperative for the future and for the aged to become explorers is unfolded, paradox begins quietly, then rapidly to accumulate until the shock of the concluding three lines of the whole section (which surely anticipate *The Dry Salvages*). *There* (goal or speculation?) does not matter either but, unmoved, we move or are moved towards? We are moving toward what we have forgotten: origin or source. The mapping of Eliot's progression/regressions here, so difficult to notate, is the only way to 'read' the effected message, the progress towards the goal and origin that is the hidden and unspoken God.

Note now how Lawrence in 'The Hands of God' (TCP 699) engages directly with his topic in the manner of an Old Testament psalm. His opening citation of Hebrews 10.31 and the ensuing line are his most memorable (and deeply orthodox) intertext, surely a gift to Christian preachers:

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
But it is a much more fearful thing to fall out of them.

The technique is repetition and response; the effect of what seems in reading so obvious is immeasurable. Yet Wright (2000: 248) alludes only in passing. Gilbert (1990) and Laird (1988) do not refer to this or to its companion texts, perhaps because these are not 'uncommon prayers'.²⁰ Gilbert can write well and empathically about Lawrence but she is often dangerously imprecise, essentially allusive. For her he is 'daemonic' and 'demonic' and 'always was' a 'diabolist'. These largely dark terms

²⁰ The phrase comes from Gilbert (1990: 319-55) introducing her unsuccessful, because too personally unresolved and too combative, attempt to read Lawrence *against* Eliot.

(we are not in the 1890's and yet 'hell' and 'black mass' frequently occur) are never defined and yet she writes so wooingly and affirmatively, approving Eliot's notorious verdict on Lawrence in *After Strange Gods*, though scarcely approving Eliot. She separates the moral/ethical from the religious/mystical, a process that can happen in Lawrence (*The Plumed Serpent*, the end of *The Escaped Cock*) but is hardly and thankfully the norm for him and never for Kierkegaard who, as we have seen, can preside ethically over the world of *Women In Love*. The essence of Gilbert's error here lies in her failure to distinguish between paganism and diabolism. If we must use these terms, it is more just to say that Lawrence is drawn often to the first and may occasionally lapse into something like the second. Gilbert (Gilbert 1990: 317) approvingly cites Jarrett-Kerr's affirmation of Lawrence's ontological religious grasp. I have offered my own affirmative reading of this feature in Lawrence, as a cultural corrective and a quest, and I cannot accept the confusions of hers. But, like Gilbert, I am obliged to accept some of the truth, though not the tone of the truth, of Eliot's assessments of the defects in Lawrence's deeper Christian doctrinal assimilation and in this I side with Davie (1978: 91-8) against Leavis (in *general* on this particular topic). There are some distinctive and deeply important kinds of formational learning that Eliot had and that he had taken great trouble to acquire.

In the second and third paragraph of 'The Hands of God' Lawrence implicitly conflates love and knowledge as the hidden positive and much as Sheldrake affirms these, only to explore, as horror, (*pace* Gilbert) the Luciferian splitting off from God into 'ungodly knowledge'. What is negatively envisaged here is more and worse than annihilation. It is 'disintegrative consciousness' as Eliot experienced it on Margate Sands in the 1920's. But Lawrence here gives similar voice to the theme and condition that Eliot's Chorus in *Murder in the Cathedral* so closely envisaged. It is a rare pairing and convergence and it is worth a closer look.

Here is Lawrence envisaging falling from God (TCP 699):

That awful and sickening endless sinking, sinking
 through the slow corruptive levels of disintegrative knowledge
 when the self has fallen from the hands of God.
 and sinks, seething and sinking, corrupt
 and sinking still, in depth after depth of disintegrative consciousness
 sinking in the endless undoing, the awful katabolism into the abyss!
 even of the soul, fallen from the hands of God!

And here is Eliot's dramatic Chorus (CPP 272):

... behind the Judgement the void, more horrid than active
 shapes of hell;
 Emptiness, absence, separation from God;
 The horror of the effortless journey, to the empty land
 Which is no land, only emptiness, absence, the Void,
 Where those who were men can no longer turn the mind
 To distraction, delusion, escape into dream, pretence,
 Where the soul is no longer deceived, for there are no objects, no
 tones,
 No colours, no forms to distract, to divert the soul

From seeing itself, foully united forever, nothing with nothing, ...

Lawrence's is the more abstract passage enervated and enlivened by the iterated verbs, especially the participles and the rhythm that they enhance. Eliot's has more imagery, more static horror, apart from the wonderfully characteristic music of the third line. He is stressing the inability to avoid or to escape hellish aesthetic impasse. The notion of the dreadful cost of separation – as something willed by the subject - active, conscious non-entity – is at the heart of each passage. The one privileges movement and inverse desire, the other image of what in essence is imageless.

But the dramatic poet, modelling his verse on *Dies Irae*, which is actually scripted as Latin background to the speaking Chorus, changes tempo, cries out to Christ crucified (the dead Christ) for help. (CPP 273) The psalmist Lawrence, in monological address to God, asks to be saved from the falling. Lawrence it seems writes best about God when Christ is not explicit in his text and Eliot will seldom be so Christianly explicit in verse again. However it has long been believed in many strands of the central Christian tradition, with the intertextuality within the New Testament to reinforce, that Christ in chanted worship prays the psalms with his people. Lawrence may or may not have consciously known this ancient tradition. I have no evidence that he did and it is more likely that he did not. What I am after is demonstration that it is the Christ-like God on whom he calls here (TCP 699-701) in this sequence of four poems, a God living and not dead. I do not expect to demonstrate this conclusively but I anticipate some strong 'hints and guesses', although to the end Lawrence retains something of a protean quality.

Hebrews 10.31 is of course New Testament scripture, though hardly differentiated from Old Testament sensibility. 'Pax', ('peace' – the Latin term is part of a Benedictine and Franciscan motto and greeting), the next poem in the sequence, is briefer, the imagery domestic and full of well-being and security, if not complacency and imaged in the evocative simile of the sleeping cat. The 'master of the house' is again a New Testament presence, more usually 'the master of the servants' and the one to whom an eschatological (final) account of service and of stewardship must be made. But he the master is present and because of this the cat/servant has (re)assurance:

a presence
as of the master sitting at the board
in his own and greater being
in the house of life.

The confidence (also a New Testament notion but not an invariably wise disposition in this sort of context: see Hebrews 4.16 and 1 John 2.28) is here countermanding the general drift of the tension of expectation of bestowal of gift or judgment within the hospitality parables, an example of which is Luke 17.7-10. Lawrence is writing a grouped sequence of poems here and they dialogue with each other. The security (which has its numinous aspect in the image of the master) no doubt contrasts with the fragmentation in the poem preceding and the biblical echoes proceed unbidden from deep memory and their implicit argument may not be scientifically plotted by a critic/reader, though they may be conjectured. Note how Lawrence pairs ontological phrasing of spondaic largesse, no doubt derived from his reading of Burnett's *Early*

Greek Philosophy ('own and greater being'), with the plain and near-biblical image (it is not precise) of the 'house of life'.

The next poem in the sequence varies the register in the opening lines. The avuncular (Larkin-like) ring of 'It is a long time before a man can get himself away' comes across as jest after the majesty and warmth of the opening two lines that precede it. But this is because the everlasting arms extend to strong loving hands. 'Abysmal Immortality' (TCP 700-1) is neither abstract nor paradoxical – this is hell as a never-ending abyss and it can be willed and snatched from God by the self. 'Never-ending' is a strictly inconceivable notion but here Lawrence images it in a repetition/contradiction that contrives to make sense plain.

... he can never touch until he reach the bottom of the abyss
which he can never touch for the abyss is bottomless.

No universalistic hope here, rather a freedom to get lost – 'through knowledge and will' we can 'break away.' (Hard syllable 'break' is repeated) and we can transmute to a 'god-lost creature turning upon himself'. In this poem there is more suspicion of parody or mockery – or else is Lawrence - like Aquinas - implying that part of the pleasure of the blessed (or the 'cradled') is to contemplate the sufferings of the lost? There is a falling off of power in this sequence but Lawrence writes swiftly and impressionistically, unlike Eliot, and sometimes the aesthetic response lies in the immediate impact or nowhere. He follows a biblical anthropology in 'Only Man', the creature who has the sole privilege of intimate fellowship with God or of loss. This great poet of the otherness of the creature, Snake, Tortoise and Mosquito, places man in the overseeing and responsive role given in the creation account in Genesis. The negative role call of the creatures that cannot fall away and are safe with 'god' (lower case) is impressive. Does he imply a subservient creator or demiurge for them? Lawrence's verse-movement is sustained and effective in this paragraph. The vividly sounding list of the creatures and their unself-reflecting inability to fall are described, making the reader aware of the possible destiny of the soul of the privileged human. The now-familiar turning and twisting downwards in this poem, so close to the vocabulary and movement of its immediate predecessor is enlivened but also with its effect minimised and trivialised by the alliteration and adverbial bathos of:

zigzagging down like the fizzle from a finished rocket
the frizzling falling fire that cannot go out, dripping wearily,

and the reader is left feeling that the poet may have lost *his* way.

The spiralling down effects of these poems of damnation inevitably recall the climactic passage in *Women In Love* as Gerald Crich goes down to his death. Clearly this journey of lostness is reiterated metaphor in Lawrence and such readings fill out our sense of what is meant in Gerald's destruction. The playfulness of a dying man, literally over the abyss, *may* be part of what struck Gilbert as demonic in Lawrence. Certainly Kierkegaard had similar moments in his earlier phase when his humour went manic and these can be tracked in some of the aesthetic writings. There are less even and more fitful pleasures from the poetry of Lawrence and accordingly his work must not be read as we read Eliot.

He is a better poet of the 'self' than Eliot and this can be illustrated by an early and a later poem. The love poem, 'Roses on the Breakfast Table' (*TCP* 217-8) combines haiku-like precision of image with romantic line-movement and rhythm and rhyme, showing that the moment will pass, but that it will lead with surprise and with pleasure to the transferred epiphany-moment of the perceived beloved self within the lover's view, the roses and the laughter and the glance all combining to adduce this. There is nothing so immediate and humanly 'there' in Eliot's many brief exquisite poems, the note of which is invariably displacement, missed encounter, perhaps more typically the matter of art, if humans are involved. Such refracted self-recognition has no need of irony and Lawrence operates here in a genre beyond most of Eliot and much of Kierkegaard. Has he achieved direct communication? Death and rebirth are the ultimate repetition and Lawrence makes much of these in some of his greatest religious poetry. Oblivion is the great and intimidating prospect and he finds it hard to envisage. This is partly the impulsion behind the spiralling tormented consciousness in the 'lost' poems that we have considered.

A series of short poems (*TCP* 721-26) coming after the great *Ship of Death* all chime this word 'oblivion' like a connecting bell. 'Temples' (*TCP* 726) is characteristic and then comes 'Shadows' (*TCP* 726-7) out of sheol, first disintegrating and then remaking and new life. Interestingly and strikingly Gilbert (1990: 315-7) makes a comparison with the poetry of George Herbert, for its quiet certainty and absence of melodrama. This is high praise but it is surely a connection of value rather than of kind. There is nothing more integrated in Lawrence's writing, no imagery more organic to sense, no less clear-eyed refusal to evade disintegration. 'Lovely oblivion' is in 'snatches' and so is 'renewal' – 'new blossoms of me'. This has to be the perceived beloved self in basic equipoise and trust of surrender, a letting go and a reception, a kenosis and a sure renewal. Lawrence like Kierkegaard "started [with] his absolute, unshaken conviction of the reality of his own self, his existence, and his responsibility (including the responsibility of choosing its own forms of responsibility) to others – 'before God'." (Poole 2003) No hesitation to continue to trust, the grounded self that does not cling –this is Lawrence's final word too – 'Phoenix-eagle, immortal bird': pure diction. (*TCP* 728)

All such journeys are hidden and Eliot's more than most. That massive talent and diversity of learning are finally subsumed into a poetry of solemn ponder, music and probe, skirting and measuring the boundaries of the religious from the confines of the ethical and the guilt to which it leads, and waiting on the coming of the unsought gift, the necessary normality of our flesh and blood happiness, our incarnate life - so magnificently celebrated by his peer and opposite.

CHAPTER NINE

Concluding.

1. Some Analogies and Coincidences of Assessment: The History of Thought

Seventy-four years after the publication of Kierkegaard's *Postscript*, T.S. Eliot wrote critically about Hegel in an essay that finally appeared in 1920 in *The Sacred Wood*, a collection of texts that were themselves much concerned with aesthetic and religious boundaries:

... if not perhaps the first, he [Hegel] was certainly the most prodigious exponent of emotional systematisation, dealing with his emotions as if they were definite objects which had aroused those emotions. His followers have as a rule taken for granted that words have definite meanings, overlooking the tendency of words to become indefinite emotions. (*SW* 9)

This is characteristically incisive and rhetorically balanced but it reads now as intentionally unfair and cleverly polemical journalism characteristic of Eliot's style at the time.¹ This is particularly so if we contrast with the humour, refinement and ironically aware *indebtedness* to Hegel of the arguments of Climacus/Silentio/Kierkegaard. In his greatest poetry, some twenty years later, Eliot was also to be thus indebted, as I shall show. Nevertheless, writing of Coleridge in the same essay and with arguably greater fairness and with genuine respect,² Eliot chastised his 'metaphysical interest', which though 'genuine' was 'like most metaphysical interest, an affair of his emotions.' (*SW* 12) Are emotions getting too severe a press here?

There is a background to this to which Eliot's 1926 Clark Lectures in Cambridge make a substantially clarifying contribution. Summarising Eliot's views at this juncture Lobb (1981: 38-41) drew attention to the perceived eighteenth-century Augustan over-emphasis on classical form and reason to the detriment of feeling and to the Romantics' later and (in Eliot's view) unsuccessful counter-endeavour to restore unified feeling to poetry. Eliot believed that this failure was because the attempt was contrary in direction to the dominant refraction of the experience of an age that was still essentially materialistic and rationalistic in its thought and was thus split off from any culturally centred expression of such a life of feeling.³ Hence this strain could only take expressive form through Idealistic and transcendental modes and assumptions that could not easily intersect with the dominant ideology, much less unite with it.⁴ From within this process there begins the well attested 'turn to the

¹ This style has been helpfully analysed, in technique, by Lobb (1981: 93-134) and, in its original setting, by Sharrock (1977: 60-183).

² '... perhaps the greatest of English critics, and in a sense the last.' (*SW* 1)

³ This point was made albeit differently by Michael Bell in 1997. 'The rationalistic aspect of the Enlightenment had called up counterbalancing movements such as the cult of sentiment; the taste for the gothic or the sublime; the idealisation of 'primitive' man as the 'noble savage'; and an appreciative regionalism of nature and culture.' (Bell 1997: 19) Bell is writing especially about myth in his context cited here but the drift of his argument throughout is that the manifestations are what he called 'self-corrective impulse[s] from within the Enlightenment itself.'

⁴ 'The end of the eighteenth century certainly saw a shift in the interests and presuppositions of writers, philosophers, and some theologians; and for this reason it is convenient to have a shorthand label [...]

subject', commented on by so many diverse scholars that we are surely safe to accept its generalised truth. It is not, of course, a novel thesis and I demonstrate this by citing two examples from a traditionalist orientation of thought: C.S. Lewis (Lewis 1964: 42; 215) presented a gloomy if accurate view of this from a seemingly unrepentant late-medievalist perspective. Henry Chadwick (Chadwick: 1981: 221-2), focusing on the period of manifest shift itself, was more measured, foregrounding the key move in the shift in understanding of ethical agency as *rational* subject (Kant) to *feeling* subject (Rousseau), though he concluded, more gently and with thus more weight, but in still similar vein to Lewis, that to view the introspection of the isolated heart as the soul source of truth can give no lasting human satisfaction. (Chadwick 1981: 228)

Michael Bell has described a sequence in nineteenth-century German Romanticism and thought that illuminates the origins of the later modernist concern with *myth*. This trajectory moves from the use of myth as a means of cognition beyond reason, an emphasis that will often privilege feeling, to a position where:

... the aesthetic, and aestheticized myth, now became the self-grounding, because ungroundable, basis of the human world.

(Bell, in Bell and Poelner 1998: 5)

Allowing for generalisation, Bell situated the full manifestation of this belief in the serious Post-Idealist modernist literature of the early twentieth century, after the First World War, and he argued that its genesis as insight, whether conscious or not, can be centred on the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). The Nietzschean promotion of aestheticized myth is still today organically active at the roots of what is called post-modernity but Nietzsche too comes from within a derived historical context. Aspects of his aesthetic doctrine are anticipated in Schelling (1775-1854) who comes within that art-privileging line of thought that runs from Kant to Hegel and whose lectures on Revelation in Berlin in 1841 were attended, amongst others, by a disappointed Kierkegaard (who disliked what he heard).⁵ Schelling had forecast a return to the poetic origins of philosophy and science via a yet to be realised mythology to which the future would give birth.⁶ It is the persuasive thesis of Montgomery (1994) to situate Lawrence, alongside Yeats and even Eliot, firmly within this movement, though he does not mention Schlegel. (Eliot would not have been pleased!) However Bell argues that the evolving anti-Idealistic reaction of the nineteenth century led to the isolation of aesthetics from metaphysics and ultimately to its ascendancy in the thought of Nietzsche.

But a further decisive supplementary stage in the formulation of his own aesthetic was Nietzsche's gradual transmutation of the thought of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-

broadly it may be said that the term 'romantic' passes from being applied to a novel of gallantry to being a description of enthusiasm, mysticism, and those non-rational aspects of human experience which most thinkers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment found uncongenial. The word which rationalists used in a pejorative sense for attitudes they regarded as embarrassing, their successors used in a positive sense.' (Chadwick 1981: 128)

⁵ SK had hoped that Schelling would offer a way of reconciling external reality with the self-creating world of his post-Kantian idealism but the philosopher did not do this. Hannay (2001: 160-3) summarises well.

⁶ It is the thesis of Montgomery (1994) to situate Lawrence, alongside Yeats and even Eliot, firmly within this movement, though he does not mention Schlegel. (Eliot would not have been pleased!)

1860). Against Hegel ('pedantic scribbler') Schopenhauer had argued for a dialectic that lead virtually to relentless human frustration, of universal Will – unconscious energy of nature – driving onwards in conflict with and oblivious to any human longing and aspiration. Schopenhauer observed human impulse, noted the unconsciousness of motive and drive and advocated a counter-striving resignation, centred on reason, as sovereign over will. The influence was vast and the gloom profound.⁷ But Nietzsche, as Bell shows, absorbed and transmuted the view of Schopenhauer into a positive tragic aesthetic. For Schopenhauer art was a form of conscious, temporary and purely mental consoling illusion that is analogous to and reflective of what for him were the fictions of human choice, purpose and self-direction. It is a singularly sombre and astringent form of aestheticism, as that term is generally understood (in, say, Pater, Wilde, the younger Yeats).⁸ But the key move is that Nietzsche re-mixes the terms:

[Nietzsche] affirmed life on the model of art. The separate realm of the aesthetic retains its meaning as a position in thought in order to *define a living posture*. (Bell 1997: 28, italics mine)

The last three words are decisive: vitalism is primary and the aesthetic product may create - or evade - responsible value. An additional factor correctly diagnosed by Nietzsche is the shrinkage, diminution or vanishing of the self as posted in the post-renaissance form of the Cartesian ego. In particular insights into *language* play a seminal part in this awareness, which, as Bell rightly says, 'lies at the heart of modernism.' (Bell 1997: 36) I have elsewhere noted Kierkegaardian concurrence with or retrievals of more ancient paradigms through which some of these current concerns may be engaged.⁹ Myth in modernity thus becomes a flexible instrument of cultural and social exploration that may use reason as one imaginatively persuasive tool amongst others. But reason in itself cannot alone be a first-order object of belief because it is invariably an instrument of a prior commitment to a worldview as Bell (1997: 22) and, notably, Taylor (1989: 339-40) have each argued. Charles Taylor's Catholic assumptions are neither Schopenhauerian nor Nietzschean but he has clearly absorbed and owned the necessary foregrounding of the aesthetic category in the search for value in the culture of modernity:

We are now in an age in which a publicly accessible cosmic order of meanings is an impossibility. The only way we can explore the order in which we are set with an aim to defining moral sources is through this part of personal resonance. This is true not only of epiphanic art but of other efforts, in philosophy, in criticism, which attempt the same search [...] The great

⁷ 'Schopenhauer's famous view is that the metaphysical substratum of the world is something hateful, something unacceptable; and that not to have existed at all would have been better than existence on the terms that obtain. He is, among all the great philosophers, the supreme pessimist.' (Magee 1987)

⁸ The American poet Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) may come close to this but even his *Supreme Fiction*, revealed, appropriately, to the Canon Aspirin (*sic.*), 'must /Be possible.' (Stevens 1955: 404)

⁹ See *EOII* 230; *EK* 88; *FT* 68; Merton (1961b: 184); Lossky (1991: 121-22); Sacks (1991: 16); Matustik (1995: 242, 244); Solomon (1998: 202); Davies (2001: 155); Poole (2003a). This is of course only representative. Taylor (1989) remains an important cultural and philosophical survey of the wider setting and its origins and Bell (1997: 37) is characteristically open to creative alternatives.

epiphanic work actually can put us in contact with the sources it taps. It can *realize* the contact. The philosopher or critic tinkers around and shapes images through which he or another *might* one day do so. The artist is like the race-car driver, and we are the mechanics in the pit; except that in this case the mechanics usually have four thumbs, and they have only a hazy grasp of the wiring, much less than the drivers have. The point of this analogy is that we delude ourselves if we think that philosophical or critical language for these matters is somehow more hard-edged and more free from personal index than that of poets and novelists. The subject doesn't permit language which escapes personal resonance. (Taylor 1989: 512)

Schopenhauer earlier and Nietzsche, later and decisively, were key influences on Lawrence's development, of course.

3. Conclusive Analogies.

In 1927, Eliot addressed the London Shakespeare Association on the theme of 'Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca' (*SE* 126-40) during which he made this well-known statement:

We say, in a vague way, that Shakespeare, or Dante, or Lucretius, is poet who thinks, and that Swinburne is a poet who does not think, even that Tennyson is a poet who does not think. But what we really mean is not a difference in quality of thought, but a difference in quality of emotion. The poet who 'thinks' is merely the poet who can express the emotional equivalent of thought. But he is not necessarily interested in the thought itself. We talk as if thought was precise and emotion was vague. In reality there is precise emotion and there is vague emotion. To express precise emotion requires as great intellectual power as to express precise thought [...] champions of Shakespeare as a great philosopher [...] have a great deal to say about Shakespeare's power of thought, but they fail to show that he thought to any purpose; that he had any coherent view of life, or that he recommended any procedure to follow. (*SE* 134-5)

Here the sapiential mode occludes all palpable sense! Quite the most incisive critique of these reflections known to me were voiced by Erich Heller (here I summarise):

To make poetry is to think. Of course it is not *merely* thinking. [But] if thought, stripped of imaginative feeling and emotion, stripped of imaginative thought, become the dominant modes of both thinking and feeling, the outcome is [...] the Waste Land ... (Heller 1961: 132-3)

In his memorial lecture of 1954 entitled 'On The Notion of a Philosophy of History', wide-ranging analogies were made by the theologian and philosopher, Donald MacKinnon.¹⁰ He commenced with some outline exegetical comments on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans chapters 9-11, that unique passage in Christian scripture in which the apostle searches urgently and passionately for a contemplative theodicy of

¹⁰ MacKinnon, Donald M. (1954) 'On the Notion of a Philosophy of History.' The 23rd L.T. Hobhouse Memorial Lecture at King's College, London, published in MacKinnon (1968: 152-68).

hope that can read the Jewish agony of striving both in the light of and against the fact of Christ. MacKinnon continued from this, typically, to refer to writers of the modern period in the setting of 'Philosophy of History', his declared topic. He offered alert, textually sensitive, and striking comparative readings of Burke, Hegel and Marx and he concluded with a formal and philosophical appreciation of the moral seriousness, the self-limitation and poetic asceticism of Eliot's *Little Gidding*.

Edmund Burke (1729-97), the least theoretical of MacKinnon's three cited thinkers, advocated the importance of fostering historical, and especially national, tradition, memory and communal bonds as safeguards against political corruption and violence. Eliot (solitary in spirit at that time) celebrated these in the *Quartets*, definitively in the fourth and last, just as he did also in the sociological-religious prose of this later period. Hegel the arch theoretician and metaphysical systemitiser had claimed when young that the formulation of his dialectic had grown out of his meditation on the Christian axis of crucifixion/resurrection.¹¹ And Mackinnon was keen to remind his lecture-audience that this was not a narrowly envisaged assertion:

Indeed it is not the least of Hegel's claims to greatness that his own work is so deeply rooted in the metaphysical and spiritual traditions of his many predecessors and masters. (Mackinnon 1968: 160)

Eliot had owned and marked a copy of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* as a student and the key belief in the eternal presence of the Spirit, of which history is a manifestation and which informs his poem, is a central Hegelian one. In ways quite distinctive to Eliot, the features of a piety to the past are also present, by multiple association, intertextuality and direct reference, throughout each of the *Quartets* and notably, in English history and writing, in the last of these. *Little Gidding* is also the only one of the four to have a title of historical and spiritual association that is not autobiographical in the stricter sense.

Eliot conceived this poem whilst an A.R.P. firewatcher during the London Blitz of World War Two. Nicholas Ferrar (1592-1637), founder and exemplary spirit of the Anglican household religious community in Little Gidding, friend of George Herbert

¹¹ Hegel's famous dialectical method is based on the conflict of opposites posited as the underlying principle of all process and progress. Hegel himself largely avoided what has become the widespread analysis of this within the terms and categories of *thesis*, *antithesis*, and *synthesis*, but these remain helpful keys to the understanding of his approach. The *thesis*, perhaps a historical movement or an intellectual proposal, is intrinsically incomplete and thus leads to an opposition or *antithesis*, a counter-movement or conflicting idea. From out of this conflict arises a *third* movement or idea, a *synthesis*. This brings together at a higher level the truth within both thesis and antithesis. In turn the synthesis itself formulates a new thesis generating a further antithesis, itself leading to a new synthesis. This is the discerned mode by which the continual generation or process of historical or intellectual development takes place. Hegel believed that the sum total of reality - the Absolute Spirit itself, that it was philosophy's task to discern - proceeds to its final goal in this dialectical manner. Art, religion and philosophy are, hierarchically, each modes of apprehension of reality, with philosophy finally privileged as the means by which the Absolute may be rationally grasped. Through and in this completed self-consciousness of the Absolute comes also the completion of the teleological process of the cosmos. The optimum self-awareness of the Absolute means that it may only be identified with God at that point and thus self-knowledge is the measure of the completeness of deity. The Christian doctrine of the incarnation symbolises the philosophical truth that the Absolute becomes manifest within the finite - within history in fact - and history is all that may be rationally known within the process itself.

and the agent of the posthumous publication of his poems, died on Advent Sunday 1637, at the beginning of the season of anticipatory watchfulness in the church year, so fittingly for one who was regularly on night religious 'watch', whether in church or house-oratory. (Cropper 1950: 54-5) His death came also at the end of the *secular* year in which King Charles of the United Kingdoms introduced a deeply unpopular new Book of Common Prayer in Scotland, with a reformed Anglican liturgy, that directly lead to the two Bishops' Wars of 1639-40. Dispute about the costs of these conflicts brought about revolt in the English parliament, the executions of the King's chief statesman and leading churchman, Stafford and Laud, the outbreak of civil war and the ensuing period of the Commonwealth. Eight years after Farrar's death, in 1645, the house at Little Gidding was attacked and desecrated by Cromwell's soldiers and virtually all Ferrar's writings were destroyed. Another four years on and the king who had one visited that community for peace and refuge in turmoil was executed. Then at a twentieth century moment of unparalleled peril and destruction for his adoptive country Eliot looked back to the survival of the Spirit, meditated through a brief visit to a small but resonant reconstruction within the ecclesiastical culture of his choice and against all odds, in the different violently divided past.

As a child aged eight, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Nicholas Ferrar had ardently sought an answer to the question 'Whether there were a God and how to be served'. One night in the school-garden he had received, so he believed, a responsive experience of God and thereafter, for the rest of his short life, he recalled the consolation of that heart-easing and heart-cheering moment as central to his pilgrimage of faith. (Cropper 1950: 29-30) It was a more fully documented, perhaps more dramatic but no more pivotal, 'night of fire' that came to Blaise Pascal, aged thirty-one in Paris, 54 years later in 1654. The presence of Farrar's 'work' figures very powerfully if discreetly in the poem while Pascal belongs to the world of Eliot's prose. He too was clearly significant for the poet because Eliot had described him in 1931, in a careful introductory study, as: '... the type of one kind of religious believer, which is highly passionate and ardent, but passionate only through a powerful and regulated intellect.' (IP 154) This is an apt description of Eliot and of Kierkegaard.¹²

Both men also had something of the inquisitive dubiety characteristic of Montaigne - Pascal's distinguished antipodal foil of the previous century - as indeed did Pascal himself. In his 1931 essay on Pascal, Eliot wrote appreciatively that Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533-92) 'succeeded in giving expression to the scepticism of *every* human being.' (IP 149) He sought to indicate the all-pervasiveness of Montaigne's intellectual and stylistic mastery over the language and the thought-world in which Pascal worked: '... there is a real affinity between his doubt and that of Montaigne.' (IP 149) Seven years later, Charles Williams (1886-1945), one-time friend of Eliot, also commented, albeit still more elusively and with less concentration of utterance, on Pascal's counter-fascination with Montaigne in his task as religious apologist. Williams saw the explicit verdict of Pascal as less than just to the Gascon who 'received communion on his death-bed.' (Williams 1963: 179-183)¹³ There is an

¹² The SK/Pascal comparison has often been made. For a good representative summary see Küng (1980a: 71-4) who also links with Barth.

¹³ In the same book cited, *The Descent of the Dove*, Charles Williams showed himself to be, in 1939, an early English advocate of the religious centrality of Kierkegaard whom he saw as 'the type of the new state of things in which Christendom had to exist, and of the new mind with which Christendom knew them.' (Williams 1963: 193) He could write, according to Carpenter (1981: 159), appreciatively

important sense, though as types of thinker they differed so greatly, that Montaigne created the *ambience* of Pascal as, perhaps later, Hegel did that of Kierkegaard and Sigmund Freud that of early Lawrence. Eliot never lost the Montaigne characteristic in his intellectual makeup and, professionally trained philosopher that he was, he was unable to secure the distinctions on which Kierkegaard focused so astutely in his novel *Johannes Climacus*.

Lawrence's case though analogous is much less susceptible to any such typological semblances as could be made for Pascal, Kierkegaard and Eliot. We have only to remember that inner and outer journey that he made from Eastwood Congregational chapel¹⁴ through and into the costly apprehension of a shattered culture and the ensuing quest for a male-female star-equilibrium with the courting of the dark gods. This process was always accompanied by a prescient awareness of the sheer alterity in nature and of the presence of the human submerged within it. Perhaps because of this, there was too the regular allure of some form of Nietzschean 'overman'. But Lawrence's expressed journey was finally completed in the marvellous kenotic human voices of *Last Poems*, which surely makes it at once both idiosyncratic *and* paradigmatic. The younger Lawrence seems to have hungered for some version of that which Farrar and Pascal knew. John Worthen showed the complexity in Lawrence of his longing for religious conversion, for 'the Holy Ghost business', (Worthen 1991: 174-7) even for a calling to the ministry of the church. But a lively and late nineteenth-century version of intellectual scepticism led to strong, genuine doctrinal interrogation and this temperamental questioning was itself allied to an emotional revulsion at the notion of submission required in the familial and social nexus in which he was situated,¹⁵. This was a characteristic that remained dominant in Lawrence, the lifelong battler against death, until almost the very end. In this turning-away there was honestly perceived loss and it has become a just truism that very few men of anything like Lawrence's powers of articulation have been so attuned to the sacred, to the *mysterium* at the heart of life.¹⁶ He thus became, in Heller's phrase, a 'disinherited mind'; (Heller: 1961) he was 'religious without religion'. (Worthen 1991: 175) He was to react against the First World War with a depth of revulsion equal to that of the young Karl Barth who was ordained in 1908. Barth's hostility to 'religion' was equally passionate and contemporary but he had, he believed, a pondered and deeply studied Christocentric anchorage and that appeared to be problematic for Lawrence always.

and discerningly about Lawrence, in ways that Eliot did not find possible. Like Eliot - and others - Williams also saw Dante as literary/spiritual mentor *par excellence* and he compares Dante's understanding to that of Julian of Norwich. (Williams 1963: 123-33) See also Williams' (1943) book-length study of Dante, *The Figure of Beatrice*. Lecturing on Milton in 1947, Eliot cited Williams approvingly as 'a critic of the type to which I belong'. (SP 125)

¹⁴ Donald Davie citing Jessie Chambers (who ought to have known) argued, and was not contradicted by Worthen (1991), that the Eastwood Chapel culture that both she and the young Lawrence imbibed 'was wholly a *literary* culture'. (Davie 1978: 92) Hence it was *aesthetic* in the Kierkegaardian sense.

¹⁵ A feature noted combatively by T.S. Eliot. See ASG 59.

¹⁶ Eliot certainly agreed with this view, whatever his other reservations. 'Lawrence lived all his life, I should imagine, on the spiritual level; no man was less a sensualist. Against the living death of modern material civilisation he spoke again and again, and even if these dead could speak, what he said is unanswerable [...] The man's vision is spiritual but spiritually sick.' (ASG 60) 'Lawrence was on the side of the angels; some reformers are on the side of the apes.' (CL/TL 293-4) The negative innuendo in the second clause cited was directed against Dora Russell (1894-1986), second wife of Bertrand Russell, whose personal and professional life intersected with those of both Lawrence and Eliot.

Mackinnon characterised the presuppositional opposition between Hegel and Marx as:

... in the end concerned with the extent to which spiritual experience can be regarded as self-justifying . [...] in an idealism such as Hegel's, the notion of subject is cast for the role which that of substance played in older metaphysical systems. Such an emphasis throws the whole weight of philosophical construction on the actual spiritual progress of mankind, his language, his art, his religion, his sciences, his philosophy.'

(Mackinnon 1968: 161)

This is matter for serious reflection and it looks 'somehow' towards a goal of reconciliation beyond the divisions that actually ensued.¹⁷ For Marx informed physical *action* ('Not to understand but to change.') is the means to reconciliation, which is less an idea than an experience to be sought. Mackinnon then makes a highly suggestive cross-reference:

Paul too [...] was tormented by this same issue of reconciliation. For him, as indeed for Marx, it was found in a deed, a deed with which all the New Testament writings are somehow concerned. Yet the knowledge of this deed did not give him solution as Marx or Hegel understood the word; for his writing remains obstinately a meditation, as if by any other style he might trivialise temptation and agony, and make Gethsemane a kind of charade. (Mackinnon 1968: 163)

Eliot's own great poetic meditations on history (*Gerontion*, in the voice of a persona/pseudonym evasive of 'temptation and agony' and contemporaneous with *The Sacred Wood* - the intricate poetic presence superior to the fluent prosing superiority - and the later *Little Gidding*) fuse retrospect, struggle, concept, symbol and feeling in a manner that Hegel, whose own strenuous and complex effort is surely unjustly misrepresented by him, would surely salute. In the longed-for cross-historical praying voices of the climax to *Little Gidding* the large-scale Idealist/Materialist split and the microcosmic Thought/Feeling split are glimpsed as co-joined, in the words of Lady Julian, historically situated before dissociation, dissolution or capitalism.

What Lawrence *knew* and the way that he knew, namely that the Eliotic mythic split, powerful enough in all conscience, could *not* be, must not be, and that language poetic and religious must be bent and stretched to re-encapsulate this presence and, supremely in the heteroglossia of *Women In Love*, to give expression to the consequential terror of the blind loss, the presumed absence. This is why he takes the risk for which Kierkegaard so firmly took Adler to task because he:

... shifted the sphere of the paradoxical-religious back into the aesthetic and thereby [...] achieved the result that every Christian term, which by remaining in its sphere is a qualitative category, can now, in a reduced state, serve as a brilliant expression that means all sorts of things. (*BOA* 173)

¹⁷ For a sympathetic but critical consideration of Eliot's own formative concern with this key issue see the discussion of the presumed turn from ontology to psychology in the Clark Lectures in Lobb (1981: 15-38).

Such words will 'not stay still', of course, and Lawrence pays that price. Read with the care and critical attention that his work merits Lawrence is clearly no Adler. He is an essential author with a disinherited mind, as Eliot sensed in *After Strange Gods* but which he was really unable to acknowledge as a valid incomplete witness in incomplete modernity, hence the alternative nonsense about Joyce's ethical orthodoxy in *After Strange Gods* that Julius (1995: 151-2) nailed with such Kierkegaardian discrimination and finesse.

But the cost of this is real and the vital textual indwelling which we saw that Kierkegaard practiced at the source of his multiple and complex authorship and which Soskice (Soskice 1985: 158 summarized clearly on the wider front of Christian language, 'remaining in its sphere', is idiosyncratic, diffuse in Lawrence. But that is part of his integrity. 'I gotta use words ..' They are not (*pace* Gudrun) to be scoffed at, although they slip and slide

Lawrence, above all, was a writer in search of connection and what he achieved in those verses of his last weeks is linguistic enactment of vital religious connection, fused purity of diction, Burnet and Bible, Persephone and Osiris integrated at last lightly, beyond artifice towards recognizable primary meaning, as he fell towards the hands of the living God. Thus his own linguistic 'wound of negativity' (*CUP* 85) is cauterized. It is almost a Christocentric syncretism in spite of itself, accessed through a distinctive and costly formation and apprenticeship to multiple languages, analogous, across divides of learning and loyalty, to the different, inwardly arduous poet of Buddha, Krishna, the one annunciation and the fire and the rose.

McKinnon's laboured but brilliant cross-readings still point the way forward for more detailed work on Eliot's range and the real issues thus disclosed are also very much those of this thesis. They concern different kinds of studied gesturing towards clarity, wholeness of apprehension and graspable meaning, as well as degrees of consciously alert presentations of the authorial self. Lawrence in his way had all this and his concerns were also wide. Søren Kierkegaard, from another age and another (unlikely) culture is a multiple master of this whole process, a stronger and surer guide than Nietzsche, who so nearly came to read him. His confident lonely ontology, his energy of brain and spirit and his most fecund solitude all part-qualify him for the role. Above all his own surrenderedness, kenotic before the elusively real in which he placed his trust, make him an illuminating focus and exemplar for our two twentieth century writers, founding and fecund and complementary fathers of English modernism, in such diverse and mutually uncomprehending ways as they so often surely were.

Appendix A: 'MODERNITY' AND 'POSTMODERNITY': A NOTE ON FEATURES AND TERMS

In contemporary critical discourse I prefer the term 'Late Modernity' (equivalent to 'late capitalism'?) as more historically accurate than the increasingly ascendant, and now dominant and accepted *Postmodernity*. I have two reasons for this. Firstly, the great Modernists anticipate so much of this climate as to appear still contemporaneous within it, at least in aspects of their work and often those the most distinctive. This can be found within Joyce (*Ulysses*), Eliot (*Waste Land*), Pound (*Mauberley* and *Cantos*) and even Lawrence, especially the Lawrence of *Women In Love*.¹ The presence of *bricolage* (Kierkegaardian 'bits') is constant, exposed differently in the case of each author, but with recognisable familial likeness.

My second reason is because of the exemplary thought of Kierkegaard and of Nietzsche in the nineteenth century, that anticipated, diversely, the roots of all the major trends. I would even argue, *pace* Lyotard and Baudrillard, that the astonishing technological shifts of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, albeit ever more boundless in their cultural and communicative possibilities for enhancement and for abuse of life, are also the acceleration of a trajectory that was fully in place in Kierkegaard's time and diagnosed by him. He, like the others mentioned here, was surely no stranger to the 'lightness' of being.

It all depends, of course, on the notion of 'modernity' that is to be superseded. As I understand the current debate I side with Norris (1992), Rose (1992 and 1993), Sampson, Samuel and Sugden (1994) and Eagleton (1985) (and behind them Benjamin 1970) against Jameson (1984) and, most certainly, against Lyotard (1984) and Baudrillard (1991). David Hume (1711-76) of course had argued for the essential meaninglessness of a notion of the self as a logical facet of the 'science of man', the Enlightenment Project, and as a consequence of the reasoning of his immediate predecessors, Berkeley and Locke. 'Mankind is nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with considerable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement.' 'Related' perceptions must not be confused with 'identical 'ones'. (Cited and commented on in Honderich 1995: 379. See also Coplestone 1964: 104-9.) These and other commendations prompted Kant to recognise his own great task, namely 'that a fresh hypothesis should be prepared and that a fresh explanation was needed of man's cognitive life and of his moral and aesthetic judgments.' (Coplestone 1964: 196.) For the aesthetic consequences of this for coherent imaginative discourse, which involve all three of our writers, see again Rose (1992 and 1993), Taylor (1989) and, particularly, Bernstein (1993).

I remain an unrepentant participant in 'the struggle for meaning' and I am, like Poole and Davies, sceptical of the 'subject's final disappearance', though this is always a closely run thing, as late Lawrence in particular demonstrates, re-visiting 'traditional matrices of meaning'.² Imaginatively to revisit in this way requires the deliberate

¹ I must stress that my comments here apply only to *aspects* of the work of each author. Pound, Lawrence, even Joyce, have left whole areas of work that are demonstrably pre-modernist in flavour. Interestingly I find this feature least in the astringent and less fecund and profuse creative work of Eliot.

² Earlier Lawrence is of course different. Famously now, he wrote: 'You must not look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another *ego*, according to whose action the individual is

maintenance of complex memory (anamnesis/repetition) that can indeed subvert as well as console. I find this very impressively in Eliot, but sometimes too self-consciously and prone to self-canoncity – a strange but real weakness amongst such refinement and discipline. It is strong, sometimes evasively labyrinthine, often idiosyncratic and usually compelling in Lawrence, becoming finally a decisive if reluctant acquiescence. Søren Kierkegaard is a master of this whole process, a stronger and more surely based guide than Nietzsche, who so nearly read him.

Nietzsche's anti-ontological onslaught, precursor of so much, was based on his psycho-sociological analysis and critique of intra-human power-relations which, when demystified, become the self-empowerment in projection of the essentially isolated post-Cartesian *ego*, under the aegis of an all-powerful stultifying deity and a false rational consciousness both of which must be exposed and overthrown in the interest of ec-static life and of overcoming. Attendant on this, of course, is the dissolution of the imperial self and the cultures of suspicion of any Grand Narrative (later: Lyotard) or explicatory superstructures, especially in metaphysical guise (later: Foucault). Difference and multiplicity are thus privileged over any purposively tyrannical interpretive schema, of which the power politics of the first half of the twentieth century witnessed more than one murderous example.

Kierkegaard's work in similar terrain but with quite different outcomes remains both an analogy- and analysis-provoking tool for that of our two twentieth century writers. And it is prescient for much else too, as Solomon (1988: 202) indicates in concluding his survey of modern continental philosophy:

The lesson of the transcendental pretence is that in order to be human we do not need to be more than human, and in order to be ourselves we should not want anything more – or less – than that perfectly modest sense of self that precedes the pretensions of philosophy. Between the self as absolute Spirit and the self as nothing at all there is, it turns out, very little difference – as Kierkegaard in particular told us some time ago.

The *basis* for the modesty is all, of course. 'Humility is endless'.

unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise to discover are states of the same radically unchanged element.' [D.H. Lawrence, Letter to Edward Garnett, 5 June 1914. (*CLI*: 82)]

Appendix B: Valerie Eliot on Kierkegaard

F.R. Leavis' cited text (Leavis 1963: 19) is a reprinting in full of a review (Volume xviii, no. 1, 1932) of *Human Experience* (1928) by Father William Tiverton. This is the preface to this work and Leavis was dismissive of the book as a work of literary criticism and of Eliot's preface which described by him as 'less offensive' but 'more insidious' than the satirical remarks about Lawrence as 'heretic' that he had written 17 years earlier in 1914, in *Strange Gods*. (ASG 58-61)

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Leavis' well-known intense dislike of most forms of self-conscious Christian literary criticism. The Reverend Andrew Rayment, 1962a: 248-54; 278-9; 1964b: 287) was moved by his own critical honesty and personal generosity to follow Leavis' criticism of Eliot, moving from an early view of Eliot as a clearly benign 'directing influence' 'in the field of critical thought' to a presence that evoked an increasingly rebarbative tone, which was particularly notable in spoken asides in his public discourses in the last ten years of his life (1978).² The lasting positive value of Leavis' critical reading of Eliot, whose distinction as a poetic practitioner he always acknowledged, in contrast to Lawrence is

Dear Mr. Rayment, Thank you for your letter of August 16th. My delay in replying has been partly due to pressure of visitors and correspondence, but mainly to checking my husband's student philosophy notes etc. to see if there was any mention of Soren Kierkegaard.

I have found no trace of his name in TSE's unpublished letters or lectures, and the Danish philosopher is not represented in his library. Wherever I have looked, I regret to say that I have drawn a blank.

I will continue to be watchful, and will of course let you know if I make any discovery.

Yours sincerely,

The whole of Bell's section 'Sincerity and Imperfection' (1988: 62-9) repays careful reading and is obviously concerned with Eliot.

It is amusing to note that Leavis' prejudices by the fact, unknown to him, that *Human Experience* was published under a pseudonym because the bishop of the diocese of Salisbury, the Resurrection at Milford, Father Raymond Haynes, was a well-known supporter of CR would disapprove of a book which was published under the name of its real author. Father Haynes's successor, Father Jonathan Graham, wrote in 1961 under the name of its real author, Mother Mary, a respected literary critic (poor Leavis) and mistress of the English language. In all this, in 1951, had been that the publishers, who were looking for a well-known religious and literary figure to write the book, had

¹ Leavis (1963: 19). This text was first published in 1932.

² I heard a number of these whilst studying in Aberystwyth when I was a Fellow in 1969-70.

Appendix C: Historical Note on Some Leavisian Assumptions.

F.R. Leavis' cited text (Leavis 1964a: 317-25) is a reprinting in full of a *Scrutiny* review (Volume xviii, no. 1) of *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence* (1951) by Father William Tiverton. Eliot wrote the Preface to this work and Leavis was dismissive of the book as a work of literary criticism and of Eliot's prefatory remarks, described by him as 'less offensive' but 'more insidious' than the notorious passage about Lawrence as 'heretic' that he had written 17 years earlier in 1934, in *After Strange Gods*. (ASG 58-61)

Leavis' well-known intense dislike of most forms of self-conscious Christian literary criticism or 'discrimination' (Leavis 1962a: 248-54; 278-9; 1964b: 287) was abetted by his sense of a failure in Eliot's own critical honesty and perception, particularly following his religious conversion. Leavis's criticism of Eliot moved from an early view of his position as a clearly benign 'directing influence' 'in the field of critical thought',¹ latterly to a presence that evoked an increasingly rebarbative tone, which was particularly notable in spoken asides in his public discourses in the last ten years of his life (he died in 1978).² The lasting positive value of Leavis' critical reading of Eliot, whose distinction as a poetic practitioner he always acknowledged, in parallel to Lawrence, is ably summarised by Michael Bell (Bell 1988: 67):

The celebration of impersonality can be a mystification; the technique an unwitting alibi. If this is relatively easy to see with hindsight that is partly owing to Leavis's detailed analyses of these authors along with crucial exemplary figures such as Blake. This was the recognition behind Leavis's increasingly radical critique of T.S. Eliot and his corresponding commitment to D.H. Lawrence. He came to see Lawrence's very vulnerability, even his manifest errors, as part of an exemplary self-exploration that achieved its representative, or impersonal value through its open-handedness and its directness of purpose. Impersonal understanding of the emotional domain is achieved in the risky arena of the self.

The whole of Bell's section 'Sincerity and Impersonality' in his book on Leavis (Bell 1988: 62-9) repays careful reading and is obviously germane to the Kierkegaardian concerns of this thesis.

It is amusing to note that Leavis would have much been reinforced in his general prejudices by the fact, unknown to him, that the 1951 study of Lawrence was published under a pseudonym because the Superior of the Anglican Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, Father Raymond Raynes, in office from 1943-58, thought that supporters of CR would disapprove of a book on Lawrence from that source. Raynes's successor, Father Jonathon Graham, agreed (reluctantly) to its re-publication in 1961 under the name of its real author, Martin Jarrett-Kerr CR, a known and respected literary critic (*pace* Leavis) and missiological writer. The unsought effect of all this, in 1951, had been that the publishers, displeased by Raynes's censorship, proceeded to look for a well-known religious and literary figure to compose a Preface

¹ Leavis (1963: 10). This text was first published in 1932.

² I heard a number of these whilst studying in Aberystwyth when Leavis was a visiting Professorial Fellow in 1969-70.

to the work. Enter T.S. Eliot, whose by then authoritative *imprimatur* considerably increased its sales and profile.³

In 1960, one year before the republication of *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, both Eliot and Jarrett-Kerr had consented to be literary witnesses for the Defence at the Crown Prosecution at the Old Bailey to suppress the unexpurgated publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but neither was called. (James 1987: 95) Dame Helen Gardner had access to the kind of statement that Eliot would have made:

Eliot's treatment of Hardy and Lawrence in his last lecture [of 1933, published the next year as *After Strange Gods (ASG)*] has always been held against him. With regard to Lawrence it should always be remembered that he was willing to be called for the defence in the old Bailey case of the Crown v. Penguin Books over *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. His brief of evidence, which I saw, made quite clear his repudiation of his attack on Lawrence. He was prepared to say that when he spoke of the author of that book as 'a very sick man indeed', he was very sick himself. (Gardner: 1978: 55)

This is an important retraction, which even today deserves to be more widely known.

Martin Jarrett-Kerr was in fact the first writer to offer a comparison between Lawrence and Kierkegaard, but there is no current evidence of any knowledge or recognition of SK either in Lawrence's Collected Letters or in the three-volume Cambridge biography. Jarrett-Kerr's is primarily an analogy of association but he does note an isolated reference in the memoir of the Danish painter, Knud Merrild, who met and knew Lawrence in the United States in the winter of 1922, to the effect that he had read and enjoyed Kierkegaard. (Merrild 1938) This reference is unique but we can only guess at what might lie behind it. There are certainly errors elsewhere in Merrild's text. See for example Moore (1960: 382-3).

³ See Wilkinson (1992: 260).

**Appendix D: Solitude as exposed existence-statement:
Thomas Merton as an Analogy with Kierkegaard and with Music**

Thomas Merton (1915-68) was the most widely influential monastic writer in the English-speaking world of the mid-twentieth century. The primary and secondary literature by and about him is immense and he was an acknowledged influence on Henri Nouwen, who recorded a personal retreat and pilgrimage to Merton's Trappist monastery (Nouwen 1994) and referred to him frequently throughout his earlier work. For apposite discussions of Merton's wider significance by an Englishman who knew and well understood him as a friend and as an exemplar, see Allchin (1978) and (1996).

Truly 'living in a monastery' and later a hermitage, Merton came to embrace the concerns of the mid-twentieth-century world in writings of extraordinary range, reference, (often) penetration and consequence. Merton was also quite clear that the monastic state could become a given condition for a person outside any observable religious 'system', one who is 'never necessarily a monk (juridically) at all.' (Merton: 1961b: 177) Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop and spiritual and linguistic mentor to T.S. Eliot, was one such person of the seventeenth century whose crafted poetic words were eloquent to the Trappist.¹ But this type of case also describes Kierkegaard, in the nineteenth century, whom Merton also held in very high esteem but with whom, to my knowledge, he never made any explicit 'non-juridical' monastic connection. Like SK (and Andrewes) Merton was intellectually brilliant, exceptionally lucid, extensively educated in and deeply affected by the Humanities, especially literature. But many of his actual references to SK, as for example in a characteristic later writing, (see Merton 1995: 170; 315) are incidental only.

However George Woodcock has given explicit evidence of Merton's intense admiration for Kierkegaard, whom he regarded as 'the most sophisticated religious thinker of the last century.' (Woodcock 1978: 111) Merton described the inner drama mapped out in *Fear and Trembling* as the finest clarification of the 'dark night of absolute faith in God' since St John of the Cross. (Woodcock 1978: 111) Murray (1991: 97-8) effectively shows Merton as an authoritative commentator on the Spanish saint. Scholastically trained, Merton had a 'thorough knowledge not only of St. John of the Cross but also of St Thomas [Aquinas]...' (Furlong 1980: 197) The second is essential for the first if John is to be understood from within his own terms of discourse, a point both confirmed and elucidated by Tillyer (1984: 26-3). The Christo-centrism in John, also stressed by Tillyer, links him directly with Kierkegaard across divisions of language, culture and associated religious formation. Comparisons between the Danish ironist and the Spanish Carmelite as teacher/exemplars of these outer reaches of inner pilgrimage have been made elsewhere and Paul Murray (Murray 1991: 117-9; 281 note 46) gives representative appropriate references whilst judiciously warning against too close a parallel, primarily on grounds of contrasting temperament. Whilst this is an obviously valid caution, in my view the theological and cultural contrasts and refractions, added to the differing modes of poetic

¹ For a summary but profound consideration of the impact of Andrewes on Merton see Scott (2001: 19-22). David Scott, a contemporary Anglican poet, has acknowledged his own indebtedness to T.S. Eliot for his researches in Andrewes. See Scott (2002: 1-2). Scott has also written poetry of place about his own pilgrimage to Merton. See Scott (1998: 124-5).

assimilation in John and Kierkegaard, matter still more and clearly *do* allow for meeting points.

Kierkegaard as writer succeeded in ultimately occluding considerations about his temperament from all that truly mattered in his communication, by which I mean that he finally attained a transparency of 'existence communication' through the very nature of his explicit and implicit disclosure, a stripping of occlusive self-regard, and that this became part of the conscious and succeeding intention behind his expressive policy of indirection. Merton's essential insight concerning comparison with the Spanish writer should thus stand as valid. He not only knew what he was talking about but he also attained a different valid, personal and situated transparency. His own 'existence-statement' became congruent. Interestingly the references from Murray in 1991 come from his study of *T.S. Eliot*, and elsewhere in the same work, he cites Merton approvingly as an authoritative exponent of the positive and freely chosen goal of asceticism of St. John of the Cross in terms that might be paraphrased, without undue loss, in a Kierkegaardian manner.

In this connection it is significant too that Del Prete (1996), writing as an educationist, related the early Merton to the mature formative monastic teacher that he became, concerned above all with the discernment of the true self. He draws attention to this project, so deeply shared with Kierkegaard, in his introductory remarks about 'Merton's concern for the development of deep personal identity, for the recovery, as he once put it, of the integrity of our inner depths.' Similarly in discussion of a poem by Merton, Woodcock wrote: 'The free man is the solitary man: not the lonely man, but the man who has learned to find his sufficiency in solitude.' (Woodcock 1978: 7) Merton's own 'Notes for a Philosophy of Solitude' were first published in 1960 and they reflect the distilled wisdom of his mature and integrated monastic perspective. He had become by then an authority on that which we are here considering - and with much that also concerned Kierkegaard - to an analogous point of arrival that became for both a place of truth:

... the solitary worthy of the name lives not in a world of private fictions and self-constructed delusions, but in a world of emptiness, humility, and purity beyond the reach of slogans and beyond the gravitational pull of diversions that alienate him from God and from himself. He lives in unity. His solitude is neither an argument, an accusation, a reproach or a sermon. It is simply itself. It *is*. And therefore it not only does not attract attention, or desire it, but it remains, for the most part, completely invisible. (Merton: 1961b: 184)

Thomas Merton died suddenly on 10th December 1968 in untimely and even enigmatic circumstances that abruptly terminated the verbal lucidity and loquacity of a remarkably *public* hermit. He was electrocuted in his assigned cottage room at the Red Cross centre in Bangkok where he was sharing in a conference of religious.² On that same date, in the early hours of the morning, the outstanding European *Protestant* theologian of the era, the Swiss Karl Barth, died peacefully and unexpectedly in his

² Only days before, on 4 December, Merton had stood before the giant Buddha statues at Polonnaruwa experiencing a unique 'sense of beauty and spiritual validity running together in one illumination ... my Asian pilgrimage has come clear and purified itself.' (Cited in Furlong 1980: 328.) Indeed it had: no longer threatened from the defended vantage point of his commitment: he had at last become critically but lovingly open in some full measure to the diverse humanities and struggles of his time.

sleep. As well as his never-to-be-completed *Church Dogmatics* Barth had left unfinished a lecture that he was to deliver for Christian Unity Week the following month, under Roman Catholic auspices in Zurich, to an audience of Catholic and Reformed theologians. The last words he wrote were about the presence of the past in the present. The forebears in the faith have, Barth wrote:

... not only the right but the relevance to be heard today, not uncritically or in mechanical subjection, but with proper attention.³

‘Proper attention’ has necessarily been given to the twentieth-century theological thought of Karl Barth by all branches of western Christianity, not least the Roman Catholic church which, ‘in spite of the vast difference it inevitably has with Barth’s theology, must nevertheless reckon with Barth as a partner in theological learning.’ (Torrance: 1962: 30) For Pope Pius XII Barth was the greatest theologian since Thomas Aquinas and Merton in his maturity reckoned with, respected and enjoyed Barth, appreciating affinity within confessional/theological difference, both contemplatively and ec-statically. He had come a long way in generosity of perspective from the defensively secure Catholicism of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, perhaps to a truer catholicity. ‘Merton developed a remarkable affinity with Barth, whose views on the contemplative life were very close to his own.’ (Woodcock 1979:112-13)⁴ In Merton’s exhilarating opening anecdote in *Confessions of a Guilty Bystander*, his reverie ‘Barth’s Dream’, the wordless composer, Mozart, critic of ‘cerebral’ Protestantism as well as being the ‘hidden sophianic’ spirit within the Swiss master, is examined in theology by Barth, who so delighted in his music. But the theologian is ‘addressed’ and healed by the synthesis of *eros* and *agape* in the creation-affirming art of Mozart, who is the childlike one ‘in the higher meaning of the word.’ (Merton 1995: 11-12.)

Karl Barth’s well-known love of Mozart began in early childhood. Indeed his sustained enthusiasm for the whole range of Mozart’s music seems to constitute the one permitted and signal exception that he allowed, for much of his career, to the otherwise unbridgeable boundary, the absence of any point of contact, between human culture and divine revelation.⁵ But this notoriously severe stance, finally alleviated, must be understood at three interdependent levels. Firstly it must be seen *historically* within the defining crisis-experiences of the two World Wars, which established and reinforced Barth’s need to break out of his western theological cultural captivity, the perceived impotence of his immediate liberal theological inheritance in the face of rampant nationalist ideologies. Secondly, *philosophically* it was a rejection of the notion of ‘God’ as the conclusion or terminus of an Aristotelian syllogism, the necessary consequence of certain things posited. This led, thirdly, to a *theological* refusal of ‘the God of the philosophers’, rejected among others in the western tradition by Tertullian, Luther and Pascal. This ‘God’ for Barth is really a conceptual artifice, about which, though it may be legitimate to ‘think’ as an anthropocentric diversion (as in Feuerbach) there can be no consonance whatsoever with the revelation of Godself, an initiative of deity to which humanity can only

³ Karl Barth (1969: 70 ff.) *Letzte Zeugnisse*, EVG Verlag, Zurich, cited in Bowden (1971: 102).

⁴ See also Merton (1995: 6-7; 11-12). The disciplined ‘solitary’ features of Barth’s own scholarly and theological life have often been noted.

⁵ Merton might have characterised this as an aesthetic lapse with religiously healing consequences. Certainly Barth ‘traded’ on it.

respond.⁶ In this emphasis in Barth, as is well known, Kierkegaard is an acknowledged mentor.

Kierkegaard was also a lover of Mozart's music, notably the operas – and in particular *Don Giovanni* – that were so much of a novelty in his time.⁷ But where Barth found in Mozart the expression of 'total music', 'the whole context of providence ... the harmony of creation',⁸ Kierkegaard, no less rhapsodic in his admiration, albeit through the persona of his pseudonym A, is concerned with the spiritualization, at an advanced level of *reflective* aesthetic delight, of the *non-reflective*, pre-culpable erotic impulse. For Barth Mozart has crossed a boundary into theophany, hymning a primal delight-in-creation. For A/Kierkegaard he has expressed to unmatched perfection and unity in music the longing and discrepancy between flesh and spirit that Christianity brings to light. (EOI 61-3)⁹ The logic of this is expressed in two sentences:

... the immediate, qualified by spirit, is qualified in such a way that it is outside the realm of spirit, [...] then this provides [...] music [...] with [...] its absolute theme. (EOI 70)

Consequently, sensuousness in its elemental originality is the absolute theme of music. (EOI 71)

As Pattison (1999: 98-9) notes Kierkegaard went on to review a Copenhagen production of *Don Giovanni* in 1845 under his own name and employing and thus owning the reflective/non-reflective aesthetic distinction as the essence of his critique. Mozart for Kierkegaard/A is thus the sublime artistic model.¹⁰ But the views of Barth and Kierkegaard seem at best (and arguably) to be complementary: they cannot really be made to meet. In their salutes to astonishing artistic immediacy and in their mutual orientation to transcendence, to a point of awareness beyond quotidian norm, there lies a degree of suggestive and profound resemblance – 'total music' and 'music's absolute theme'.

The later poetry of T.S. Eliot operated across a similar frontier ('music heard so deeply'). Although the inaccuracy of the title of *Four Quartets* as a musically equivalent term for the poetry may not be widely appreciated, it was convincingly exposed sixteen years ago (see Bebbington 1989). Kierkegaard, Barth (and Eliot) each meet a different historical/cultural and, it may be, *personal* need in their musical references and I have no doubt that SK's is the most accurate aesthetically nuanced discussion. This is partly because it purported to be just that, whereas Barth's quite

⁶ See Bowden (1971: 119); Allen (1985: 114-5); Gorringe (1990: 6, 9-11); Avis (1997: 49-52).

⁷ Croxall (1948: 41-7) gives the background to this. Walsh (1994: 69-76) provides a lucid analysis of the poetic and aesthetic significance of the legendary Don Juan for Kierkegaard in 'The Immediate Erotic Stages' in *Either/Or Part One* and why *Mozart's* presentation is for him supremely efficacious.

⁸ Passage cited by Gorringe (1990: 114-5).

⁹ See also discussion of and footnote on Nygren in chapter 2 of this thesis.

¹⁰ George Steiner (Steiner 1988: 103-4) noted the 'polyphonic' quality of Kierkegaard's thought and style as that which links him so profoundly to music as expression. George Pattison (Pattison 1999: 99) writes of the 'fervent lyricism of the *Either/Or* essay.' His brief comments on this text are very helpful and his implicit bracketing of the aesthetic pseudonym A with the views of SK is permissible for his purposes here. I have followed this but for a convincing *differentiation* of the responses of A, SK, *Don Giovanni* and Mozart, see Connell (1985: 56-64) who seeks to show how the non-reflective aesthetic stance of *Giovanni/Mozart* is demonstrated reflectively – and thus disjunctively – within the text.

different genre of approach is, ultimately, a form of (exquisitely expressed) special pleading, a personal delight that, if universalised, would have lead to a greater freedom but also have required a systemic revision.¹¹ Meanwhile Eliot's terminological lapse, his scarcely allowable (if understandable) relief from the 'intolerable wrestle with words' into the illicit relapse of 'the [admired] inexplicable mystery of sound' sustains in explicit speech the tensile fracturing relation between word and meaning at the same time as the aesthetically mediated communication colludes overmuch with the risk of enchantment and tips into it.

¹¹ Bowden (1971: 119-20) and Merton (1995: 12) both seem implicitly to acknowledge this.

Appendix E: *I was a clockwork doll**'I was a clockwork doll'*

I was a clockwork doll that night,
and I turned left and I turned right
and when I fell and broke to bits,
they recomposed my wax and wits.

I was a proper doll once more,
my manner carefully demure;

and yet a doll of another kind—
an injured twig that tendrils bind.

And when they asked me to a ball—
although my steps were rhythmical,
they partnered me with dog and cat.

My hair was gold, my eyes were blue.
I wore a dress where flowers grew.
Cherries blazed on my straw hat.

Dalia Ravikovitch (1936-2005)

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